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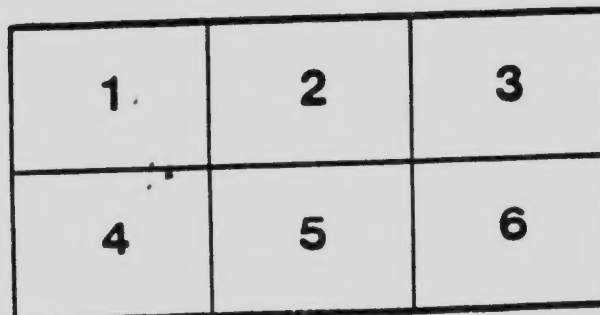
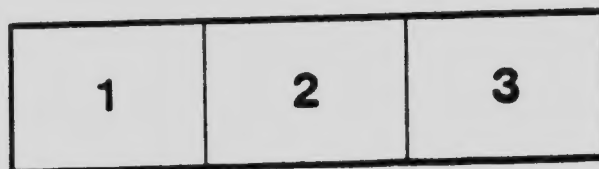
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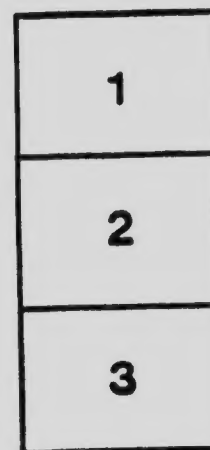
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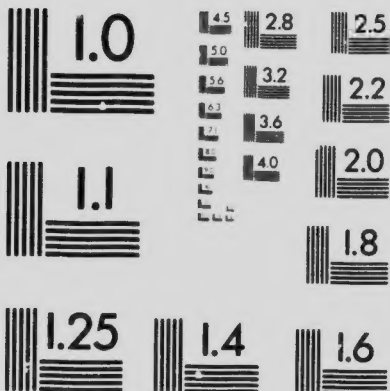
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THE ELF
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HER FRIENDS



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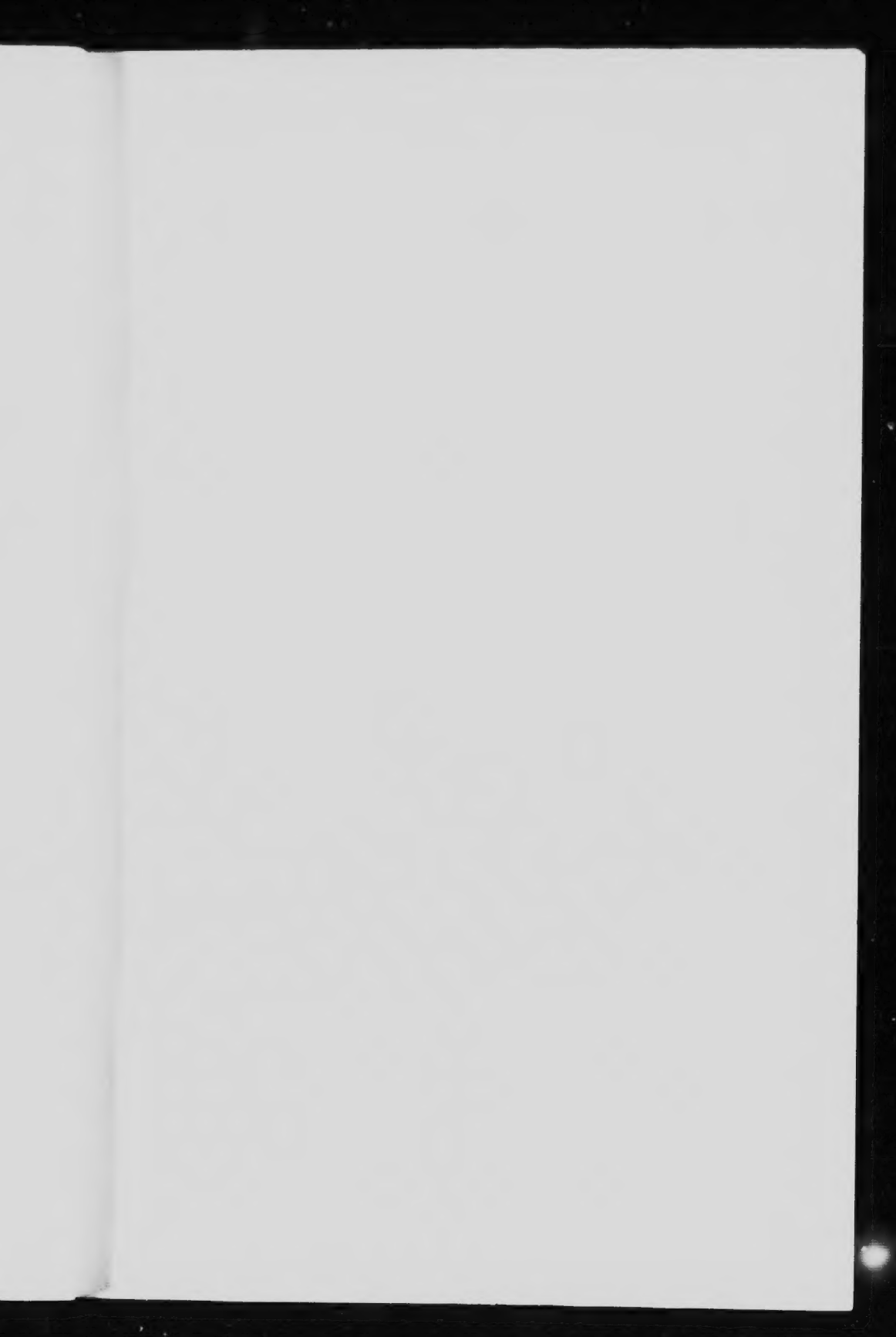
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BETTY, AGED SIX

| *Frontispiece*

THE ELF AND HER FRIENDS

A HORSE STORY FOUNDED ON FACT

BY

ISABEL WORTLEY

AUTHOR OF "TOPSY'S FOUR HOMES," "TOPSY'S TRAVELS AND
ADVENTURES," ETC.

TORONTO

BELL & COCKBURN

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A deed in which the twice blessed quality of
Mercy hath no part.

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The Elf and Her Friends.

CHAPTER I.

THE ELF BEGINS HER STORY.

I AM a beautiful bay mare called "The Elf," and I will begin at once, little children, to tell you all I can remember about myself and my friends ; not only my horse friends, but also about the humans and animals who have some time or other come into my life and helped to make it happy. For remember that I, the Elf, am a very fortunate horse, with the kindest, most thoughtful and understanding of masters, and it is chiefly because I am so very happy myself that I feel I must do everything in my power to help my less fortunate brothers and sisters ; and so, without another moment's delay, I begin the history of my life, and will endeavour in the telling of it to bring home to the human mind some of the things which I have heard

master tell Ricketts, our head groom, that all keepers and lovers of horses ought to know, to enable them to understand horse nature and horse needs more thoroughly.

I expect some of my quite young readers when they take up my book will open their eyes in childish wonderment, and, turning to mother or nurse, will ask the very sensible question, "Can horses talk and write?"

And if the one questioned is a true lover of horses and has troubled to study them, she will answer, "I don't think I have ever seen or heard of a horse writing; but he can speak in a most wonderfully eloquent way with his large expressive eyes, and tell you when he is frightened or tired, happy or sad," and so the true horse lover has no difficulty in penning the thoughts which I, the Elf, want to pass on to the children in the human world.

Amongst other things I want them to realise how greatly all horses need the full use and benefit of their beautiful tails, and I want them to plead with me, with those who so recklessly and thoughtlessly deprive horses of one of their most useful members for trivial, silly, and petty reasons.

I was born in a lovely old place in Kent, and as I roamed about in the beautiful fields surrounding my home, my mother, Lady Beechwood, would often talk to me about my dear master, and tell me how lucky I was to be her son and to be born into such a kind home, and to have from the very beginning of my life such a master as mine.

I have told you my colour is bay and have called myself beautiful, and though this sounds a bit conceited, it is quite true ; and please, little people, if you are inclined to doubt the fact, will you look at my picture, and then, somehow, I feel sure you will agree with me, at least I very much hope so.

You will notice that I have a long white mark on my forehead, and also a little white on each of my legs just above the hoof.

My tail is long and flowing, and the next time you go out for your walk, little humans, I want you to look particularly at all the horses you meet and think, if you can, how I am different from nearly everyone of them.

Perhaps if you are very small you won't be able to find out for yourselves, but your

big brothers and sisters will help you, and if you haven't any, take my book with you and open it at my picture, and then I think even the very tiniest of you will look up and say to whoever is with you, "Why hasn't that horse got a beautiful tail like the Elf's?"

In time I am going to answer that question myself for you, dear little humans, and although I cannot speak from experience, I am thankful to say, yet I can tell you all that my friends, Invicta and the Dandy, have told me on the subject. And the latter, alas! spoke from an all too bitter actual experience.

From the very beginning of my life I had plenty of companions to play with, for besides several foals of my own age, I had my brother Eros and Chanticler, both a year older than myself, and we were all very happy together.

At first I and the other foals kept very close to our respective mothers; but as time went on we began to talk amongst ourselves, and to have our own little excitements and adventures. I had a sort of precedence in the field, because both my father and mother were rather celebrated horses. My mother

had won the championship at Richmond Horse Show for going fast, and my father, George Hummer, was also a famous fast racing trotting horse.

Dear master made a pet of me from the moment I was born. He was very fond of both father and mother, and so I suppose he naturally took to me their child; and I was soon known as his favourite horse, although he loved us all. Master was constantly about, and when I was only three days old he began to take me in hand.

He told Ricketts that he wished to undertake my education entirely himself, and would train me while he was busy with Eros.

Ricketts seemed a bit disappointed, but I was so delighted when I heard what master said, that I made up my mind to be just as good and obedient as ever I could.

Horses begin their education at a very early age, and, as I have mentioned, I was only three days old when master gave me my first lesson.

He began by putting on me a head stall with very long reins, and then walked behind me holding them.

At first I tumbled about and was very

awkward on my long, ungainly legs; and mother, who was standing near, looked very anxious, which made me feel nervous.

I soon pulled myself together, however, for was not dear master teaching me, and I must be worthy of his training at all costs. Master noticed my valiant efforts, and his kind, gentle voice encouraged me to walk steadily, to turn from right to left, and to stop at his pleasure.

My ear soon got accustomed to "Woa," which meant I was to stand perfectly still, and I learnt that a slight pressure on the right or left rein indicated where master wished me to go.

There was no loud shouting, no pulling at my soft, tender mouth, and never a thought of using a whip; in fact the whole lesson was very like the game I have heard you little humans call "Playing at horses," for master held the reins behind me, just as I have seen mother or nurse do for you, and don't I know how you enjoy yourselves when you go prancing along.

I don't think you can have a nicer game to play when you go out for your daily walks. I know I just love it when master plays

with me, for though he really means it for a lesson, he makes it so very nice and interesting that I feel I am having good fun all the time, and I try with all my might to please him.

I never stand in the middle of the road, and refuse to go on, as I saw a small boy human do the other day. The child and his little brother were reined together, and their mother was leading them.

The elder boy, with his beautiful auburn sun-kissed curls flying in the wind, and his lovely little face wreathed in mischievous smiles, was being a v y obstinate horse indeed.

"Gee up, gee up, Georgie," said the mother, trying to coax the bigger boy, for Donald, the younger, was anxious to get home to his dinner, and quite ready to gallop there at breakneck speed if only Georgie wouldn't drag back so.

Georgie, however, wouldn't move, and the more his mother urged him on, the more stubbornly did he pant his little sandalled feet on the ground and stammer out, "I won't move on, mother! I won't, I won't, I won't! I don't want to go home yet."

His mother coaxed him a little longer, but as he still refused to go the way she wanted him to go, she at last slipped the reins off little Donald, and picking horse Georgie up in her arms, carried him home.

I couldn't help thinking what master would say if I were to behave like Georgie, when he wanted me to go home, and I wanted to stay out.

Master is a very busy man, and like most big humans, has heaps of things to do, so it happens very frequently that I have to go back to my stable long before I feel inclined to do so.

CHAPTER II.

MY STABLE COMPANIONS.

MASTER, with his usual forethought, provided me with a beautiful box in the same stable as my mother, and Eros and Chanticleer also shared the same bright cheery abode.

The wooden partitions of our boxes were quite low and we could easily see each other through the wide iron railings at the top, which made it much easier to talk than if, as is generally the case, the wooden part had reached much higher up, hiding us from each other, and thus making conversation difficult and awkward.

Every morning from the first moment I wake, I listen anxiously for master's footsteps. I am generally the one to recognise them, and I rush to the stable door. Eros

and Chanticler have sometimes taken other footsteps for dear master's, but I, never; I know his step from ever so far away.

If Jackie, the boy who fetches the post-bag, carries a heavy load as he passes our door, I know master may be a little late in coming, and I always stretch out my neck and try to see whether the bag looks fat and bulgy or thin and flat.

I then draw my own conclusions; but I am not always right, for sometimes the thin bag takes longer to deal with than the bulgy one.

Directly I do hear my master, I rush to the stable door and loudly neigh my good morning to him, and when he lets me out I rub my head against his shoulder and lick his dear hands.

These are my ways of showing master I love him, just as you little children throw your soft arms around your mother's neck and press your sweet lips against hers for the same reason,

Our ways of showing affection are quite different, but they both tell the love we feel—that love which makes life happy in both the animal and human world, and without

which neither you nor I, little people, would care to live.

In the very early days when I caressed master, he once or twice offered me sugar, and although I have all a horse's fondness for sweet things, I never could take them when thus offered. I could not bear to think for a moment that master should think mine cupboard love.

My little attentions to him were the outcome of the love I bore him, and not for what I could wheedle out of him.

I looked into his brave, strong face with my great brown eyes, and told him just as plainly as ever I could that it was for his own dear self I loved him and not for sugar and sweetmeats.

Master read my thoughts at once, and feeling he had insulted me, begged my pardon and said, "I understand, Elf." And he never again offered me tempting morsels to eat when I showed him affection.

I felt so grateful to him for understanding me so well, for I loved to rub up against him and to kiss his hands, and I could not bear the thought that my overtures should be in any way misunderstood.

I felt too big for that kind of thing. It was all very well for the tiny toy terrier dog, called Moses, to dance and fuss round master for what he could get, but not me.

Moses is a very pretty little dog and always slept with me in my stable along with Minnie, the large Persian cat, until the incident I will now tell you about happened.

The little fellow and I had become very friendly. I admired his splendid black coat which shone like satin, and his head, long and lean, was really a beautiful shape.

He was rich in tan about the mouth and legs, and each toe had well-defined pencil marks showing plainly on them, and there was a black spot or thumb-mark on the joint of each knee.

Over both eyes was a large spot of tan and also inside each long ear. There was also the right amount of tan on the long, straight legs, so that altogether Moses possessed nearly all the points which a toy black-and-tan terrier ought to have.

He was a proud little dog and a regular high-stepper, and I think during the course of his eventful life he managed to come into

warlike contact with every animal, small and big, inhabiting England ; and I must say he always fought valiantly in self-defence, when the object of his sharp bites, whatever its size, turned upon him.

He thought nothing of going quietly up to huge fellows like Eros and Chanticler and of giving them a mischievous pinch on the leg, and when pain and surprise made them kick out, I trembled for the little terrier's life ; but I need not have been afraid for him, he was so quick that he always managed to escape the blow which might so easily have killed him outright.

Sheep stamped their feet angrily at him, and pigs vied with each other in poking him out of the fields they occupied ; but Moses didn't care. He hadn't a scrap of fear, and invaded any territory he thought he would, regardless of consequences. No place was sacred to him, and he told me, without the slightest regret in his voice, how he went into the beautiful drawing-room in master's house, and with his little feet covered with mud, jumped from one dainty cushion to another until he found one to suit him.

I can well imagine his wee majesty cosily

curled up on the prettiest and most delicate seat, surveying, without one blink of regret in his bright black eyes, the print-marks of his reckless paws on the cushions he had tried, but found not quite to his satisfaction.

He considered himself monarch of all he surveyed, and he insisted on having the company of animals or humans, or both, constantly in attendance. He would not be left alone, and if by chance he found himself shut up anywhere, he howled and shrieked so loudly, that anxious people hurried from all quarters to find out whatever could necessitate such heartrending cries.

Moses welcomed his rescuers with wild high jumps and overwhelming kisses, and he didn't care one little bit for the consternation he had caused, and all just because he had found himself alone.

One day, however, when I was out with master, the poor little fellow got shut up in the stable. At first he thought he was alone and began to cry, then quite suddenly he saw Minnie and stopped at once. He walked up to her and danced about, inviting her to play in his usual friendly way.

Contrary to all expectations Minnie slapped

him in the face, and when he tried to protect himself, for Minnie didn't stop at one blow, she put out her claws—a cat's surest weapon—and attacked the little black dog's eyes.

Moses, for the first time in his life really terrified, tried to run away from Minnie, but she closely followed him, and when he noticed something moving in a corner and made a dash for the place, Minnie was on his back in a moment, and her sharp teeth pierced one long ear.

Moses now cried from real pain, and if Ricketts had not heard him and gone to the stable just when he did, I am afraid Minnie would have killed the little terrier, for the moving something in the corner was a heap of five fine kittens which had only been born that morning.

Master was just leading me in when Ricketts came out of the stable, carrying the poor little Moses in his arms. One eye looked like a ball of blood, and one ear was bleeding dreadfully.

Tenderly master and Ricketts bathed all the damaged parts, and fortunately the poor shivering terrier was not so badly hurt as

the stains of blood suggested. Moses received much loving sympathy and petting, which made him feel happy and important; but never again would he come into my stable.

If he and I were talking together in the field, and he caught a glimpse of Minnie, he fled away as fast as his long legs would carry him.

When Minnie's family was able to take care of itself, she began to miss Moses very much, and tried to make up to him; but all her overtures were in vain. The little fellow had received a shock he would never get over; his joy at finding Minnie when he thought he was alone, and her violent attack on him had left an impression which I am afraid, not even time, the softener of all wrongs, will be able to obliterate.

I pointed out to Moses that it was only Minnie's motherly anxiety which had made her so violent; but he only shook his little head and said, "Please don't talk about Minnie to me," and so I said no more.

The break made Moses and me see much less of each other, for which I was really sorry. I had grown to love the cheeky little

chap with his fearless, spoiling ways, and I missed him sitting at my feet, his whole body alert for mischief, and his long black ears, unspoilt by scissors, upright and expectant; but Eros and Chanticler were rather glad when he ceased to come to the stable, because they didn't like the sharp little pinches on their unsuspecting legs, with which mischievous Moses loved to surprise them, for the fun of seeing them kick out, in spite of the great risks he ran of being maimed for life.

CHAPTER III.

MASTER BREAKS ME IN AND I RACE A BOY ON A BICYCLE.

My days were spent very much in the same way until I was a little over three years old.

I got to be quite clever playing at horses with master, and I soon learnt to walk in a steady, graceful way, much to my mother's joy, for she did not like to see me floundering about.

Both my parents were fast racing trotting horses, and Eros and I were ambitious to do them credit, and also to please master, who had already begun to train me to go fast.

When I first had my iron shoes put on I didn't like them at all. They felt heavy and I felt clumsy, and I seemed to stumble about in the same uncertain way I had seen Evelyn, Rickett's little daughter, do, when she put on what I thought were iron shoes, but

what she called roller skates, and tried to walk across the stable yard.

She stumbled and fell about all over the place, but she always jumped up again with a merry laugh and struggled on as before, and very soon she began to tumble less frequently, and in the end went gliding over the yard like the brave little girl she was.

Evelyn's perseverance made me make up my mind not to be beaten, and I very soon got, not only not to mind my shoes, but to be grateful for them, as Eros and mother told me I should be when they heard me grumbling, for they protected my feet from the hard, rough ground, and kept them from being cut and torn by the numberless sharp little stones, which I soon found it was impossible to avoid when master began to take me on to the roads. I was not always to wander by the side of mother and tread only on soft green carpets.

When master considered me strong enough to draw a carriage he harnessed me to one of his lightest racing wagons, about fifty pounds in weight, and which you can see in miniature harnessed to Tiny, a young friend of mine, with little Evelyn sitting in it and holding

the reins. She was the only child about the place who was small enough to get in, and even she was rather a tight fit.

I felt a bit nervous when we set off for my first real drive ; I was very anxious to do credit to dear master's training, and also I felt very responsible for the precious burden I was carrying in the wagon behind me.

If I were the cause of anything happening to master I felt that I would never dare to face mother and Eros and Chanticler again, for they loved him, even as I did, and they felt it a little hard that he gave so much more personal attention to me than he did to them, and I always felt Chanticler was a trifle jealous.

With a plain snaffle-bit between my teeth, instead of the severe curb most driving people use, master and I started off for our first drive, and I went just as well and carefully as ever I could. My mouth being quite comfortable, and my head free—for of course I wore no cruel bearing-rein—I felt no inclination to pull, and I paid prompt attention to master's gentle pressure on my reins and to his soft "Woa, woa."

We had a lovely drive, and my heart was

overflowing with joy when we were safely back in the stable-yard, and I heard my master say to Ricketts, as he kindly patted my head, "The Elf has gone splendidly."

This was indeed praise, and I made up my mind to keep up my good character.

Little Evelyn brought me sugar, which I enjoyed very much, for I didn't mind taking it from her, and indeed she would have been very grieved if I had. It wasn't like taking it from master in return for a caress.

I felt in very good spirits, and so grateful to master for training me so kindly. Mother had told me how horses are generally broken in, and I didn't think it was a nice way at all.

She told me that the usual way of breaking a young horse in is to harness him beside an older one in a very heavy carriage with several men driving and several others running by its side leading it with long ropes and shouting and gesticulating wildly.

This method of breaking horses in is very terrifying to them if their owners only knew it, and I feel dreadfully sorry for all my friends who have to go through this kind of training, and I do wish they and all horses

could have a clever and sympathetic master like mine; so please little people who read this tale learn as you go on, for I have much to tell you yet, and then when you come to have horses of your own or to train for other people, you will escape the degradation of having to use that brute force in your training, alike deteriorating to both teacher and taught, and you will learn to work on the affection and intelligence of the creatures of the animal world, and thereby learn many a lesson of noble effort and patient forbearance.

The ruling power in all master's lessons was and is "love," and the effect was and is still wonderful.

No creature about the place, and there are many, has the least fear of him, and the humblest will take liberties with master which it would not dare to take with the stable-lads, so sure are all of kind and humane treatment. Their helplessness appeals to him, as all such living creatures, in their blind, mute trustfulness must appeal to the soul that is truly great.

So again, little children, learn as you read, and draw into your own natures that love for God's dumb creatures which every big and

little child should feel for those whom it has pleased their Father in heaven to make a little lower than themselves. and let the kitten in the nursery, and perhaps the dog too, have an easier time than before.

Master always urged me to go fast, but he never let me get tired. He only allowed me to go quite short distances at a time, scarcely ever more than a few hundred yards.

He never even flicked me with a whip, but just spoke firmly and gently to me, telling me what to do, and I was so anxious to please him that I seldom made a mistake.

Sometimes I got frightened by things I saw on the road, and then I neighed, "Please, master, will that white thing hurt me, or is that barking little dog going to bite me?"

Master quite understood and coaxed me past these imaginary dangers, and as no harm ever came to me, I soon grew not to mind the things I saw, and went boldly and bravely on my way.

Of course I kept to the plan of neighing to master when I saw suspicious-looking objects about; but he never tired of encouraging me to go on, and I always trusted him and obeyed his voice.

When I got used to going really fast, master often let me race boys we met on the road who were riding bicycles, and I always beat them.

Once a poor-looking errand boy tried very hard to keep in front of me with somewhat disastrous results.

Strapped to his machine he had a basket containing several eggs and a nice plump-looking chicken.

When master and I overtook him, and he saw how fast I could go, he evidently at once made up his mind not to be beaten, and rode at a tremendous speed to keep up with me.

Master, knowing how difficult the little fellow (for he looked little, though I heard him tell master afterwards that he was fourteen) would find this, and fearing a tumble, kept me well to the side of the road to give him plenty of room.

It was well he did, for I got so excited that I think I nearly flew for a few minutes. Then came a crash, and boy, basket, bicycle, and eggs rolled over on to the ground.

The fowl, even in death, made a flying leap and settled on a dust heap, and the

broken eggs spread themselves in wild confusion on the roadside.

"Woa, woa," said master, and I stopped instantly and stood perfectly still. Master turned me round, for I had got well in front of the boy during the last few seconds, and together we surveyed the *débris*.

I was deeply interested in the scene before me.

There sat the boy in the middle of the road, his thin, pinched face full of anxious amazement.

The broken eggs, as if trying to make the most of time, raced each other towards a common goal, and all was quite, quite silent.

For some few seconds master did not speak, and I noticed that the little lad's lip began to quiver, and then slowly, very slowly, as if reluctant to fall, tears rolled down his thin, white face.

I expected master would at once give the child money and tell him to repair his loss, and I was very much surprised when, after kindly asking him if he were hurt, and receiving the reply, "No, sir," to hear master say "What are you going to do, my lad?"

What could the boy do, I thought, for he was evidently much too poor to replace the eggs himself, and even the fowl, which had looked nice and clean in the basket, was now covered with dirt. For two or three seconds the boy did not speak, and then he said :

"I bet I'll have to do a slope, mister ; suppose you couldn't drive round and tell my guv'nor 'ow it was a haccident?" and I thought I detected a pleading note in the boy's voice.

"But it was not an accident," said master, and he kept his eyes fixed on the boy.

"The guv'nor 'ud believe a gent. like you."

"Even if I lied?" and I could tell from master's voice that he was a bit sad.

"Niver mind, mister, I'll git out of the mess somehow," answered the boy ; and he picked up the few eggs which were not broken and, carefully wiping the fowl with his thin, patched jacket, which I noticed was comparatively clean, he placed it and the eggs in his basket and prepared to mount his bicycle again—it fortunately had not suffered in the fall.

I was disappointed. Was master going to do nothing for the poor little chap?

I neighed, "Please give him something, master," and he said :

"It's all right, Elf. I'm just thinking out the best way to help the lad"; and I at once felt remorseful, for had I ever known a master lose an opportunity of showing a kindness or forsake either a human or an animal in distress?

"How old are you?" suddenly asked master, and he placed a detaining hand on the boy who was about to ride off.

"Fourteen, mister," and a gleam of light flickered over the lad's face. Perhaps after all the gent. was going to do something for him.

"How much would the eggs and fowl cost?"

"The fowl be three-and-three, and there was half-a-crown's worth of eggs. Five-and-nine in all, sir."

Master put his hand in his pocket and drew out some money.

It was all gold, and the boy's eyes glistened.

Was the gent. going to pay damages and

give him a tip for himself, too! I did wish master would, the lad looked so pinched and hungry.

"Five-and-nine," said master, "and I have nothing less than a sovereign."

"I could git you change, mister," and the boy's voice sounded distinctly pleading.

"Right," said master, and he scribbled down his name and address on a slip of paper and handed it to the now happy little chap. saying to him as he did so,

"What's your name?"

"Bob Jones, mister."

"Well, Bob, you return fourteen and threepence to me as soon as you can."

"Yes, sir, thank you, sir"; and off went the lad as quickly as he could—I expect to make up for lost time.

Master hadn't even told Bob to keep threepence for himself, and he did look so hungry.

I was disappointed, for I felt rather a liking for the boy who had tried to beat me on his bicycle. Most of them gave up very soon, and I loved the sport of a real race.

When I got back to the stable and told

Eros about the race and what had happened, he said :

"Master 'll never see the change for that sovereign, I know."

But I felt differently. Bob Jones had an honest face, and, little friends, you shall hear later on which of us was right in our opinion of him, Eros or I.

CHAPTER IV.

AN UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCE.

WITH master's regular and careful training I soon got to go very fast without getting tired.

Master is always very particular that none of us should be overstrained, for if a horse is continually allowed to tire himself out, he soon gets winded, and in time becomes what is known as a roarer. Many good horses have to be sold for inferior work because of this unpleasant affliction, and if ever you hear a horse go panting and puffing along, you can be fairly sure that some time or other he has been allowed to get over-tired.

Although I could now go very swiftly, I was not yet equal to either Eros or Chanticleer ; but master never reproached me for this, he just kept on patiently encouraging me.

When I talked to Eros about not being able to go as quickly as he can, he was very kind and reminded me that I am a year younger, and said that perhaps after another year's training I might be able, not only to go as quickly as he can, but even to outrun him.

Chanticler was not quite so nice, and told me rather unkindly that she did not think I should ever be equal either to Eros or herself. The truth was that Chanticler was jealous of me. She hated master making such a fuss over me and my training, and did not see why she and Eros should be left to Ricketts, while I had so much of master. Then again, Eros and I loved each other very much, and Chanticler didn't like that either. I told mother that I didn't seem able to please her and that I did try so hard, and mother told me not to mind too much and never to forget to be courteous and kind, even if she did say slighting things and tell me I should never be as clever as she is.

About this time some men asked master to let them try driving me.

I heard the request and I looked at master and neighed, "Please say no," and I am sure master wanted to, because his consent

sounded so very reluctant. He patted my head and told me to go well, and I neighed,

"I will do my best for you, master," and I really did try.

When the time came for me to go with these strangers, Ricketts harnessed me to a light cart, and he was extra kind and gentle as he did so. I am sure he felt sorry for me, because he knew how I should hate going without either master or him.

He drove me round to the house of the men, and then left me. I felt very frightened, but for master's sake I must forget my fears and do my very best.

The two men jumped into the cart, and one of them, taking my reins in his hands, gave a sharp rough jerk at my mouth as a signal for me to start. My mouth had never been pulled before and the pain was awful, but for master's sake I must be brave, and I attempted to start off.

Then came another jerk and pull, my mouth hurt frightfully, and I didn't know what I was wanted to do, so I stopped and waited for orders.

I tried to turn my head round and to say as plainly as I could,

"Please be kind to me, and I will do just as you wish."

Another rough pull and my head was jerked back again.

The severe pain at my mouth was getting more than I could bear, and I began to grow restless from fright and intense suffering.

I simply couldn't stand still, my mouth hurt me so dreadfully. I felt I should go mad, and I tried to run away from my persecutors.

Tighter and tighter grew the grip on my rein, and fiercer and yet more fierce the pain at my mouth, and then, oh! shall I ever forget the horror, the pain, and the indignity of the whole thing—I felt a stinging lash across my back.

Frantic with fear, and now scarcely knowing what I did, I struggled as hard as I could to tear myself away from these cruel men, but I only made matters worse.

Crack, crack, crack went the whip, and each time it came down upon my poor back with greater force than before.

I really don't know what would have happened if a stable-lad, belonging to the men who were trying to drive me, hadn't sensibly run off to fetch my own master. He

came to me just as quickly as ever he could, and at the sound of his dear voice I stood perfectly still, though I was trembling in every limb, sore in body and mind, at the treatment I had just received.

"Elf, my poor Elf," said master, as he gently stroked my head; and soon his dear soothing voice drove the madness of fear out of me and I was his own docile Elf again, thankful to rub my head against his shoulder and shower my kisses on his hand.

Meanwhile my tormentors stood silently by, and watched master as he bathed my poor sore mouth with some warm water which he had got the boy who had fetched him to me to get for him.

The men who had treated me so roughly now looked thoroughly ashamed of themselves, and offered to help master; but he would not allow them to do so.

It took me a long time to get over my fright, and even now, when I hear the crack of a whip, some of the old fear comes back; but I am happy in knowing that no one but master or Ricketts will ever drive me again, for I heard master say so, and he always keeps his word.

The whole experience was most terrifying and unpleasant, as I am sure you will quite realise, little humans. I had meant to do everything in my power to please those two men for master's sake, and especially as he had told me to "go well."

They had only repaid my good intentions by torturing me, and had never even given me the chance to show how nicely I could go.

Then the cruel indignity of anyone daring to thrash me, when my own master never even thought it necessary to carry a whip with him, let alone to use it to me.

Perhaps I was not as brave about bearing the pain, when my mouth was pulled, as I might have been, but I was so frightened, and those men did hurt me so much.

Imagine, little friends, how you would feel if your mother allowed someone to take you out for a walk, and whoever it was began to pull you by the arm roughly, and without any apparent reason to go on pulling until you felt nearly sick with the pain. Then when you ask what is wanted of you, the only reply you get is a succession of hard, cruel slaps.

Somehow, I think you would feel very much as I did and try to run back to your mother, to pour into her sympathetic ear your tale of insulted feelings and hurt dignity.

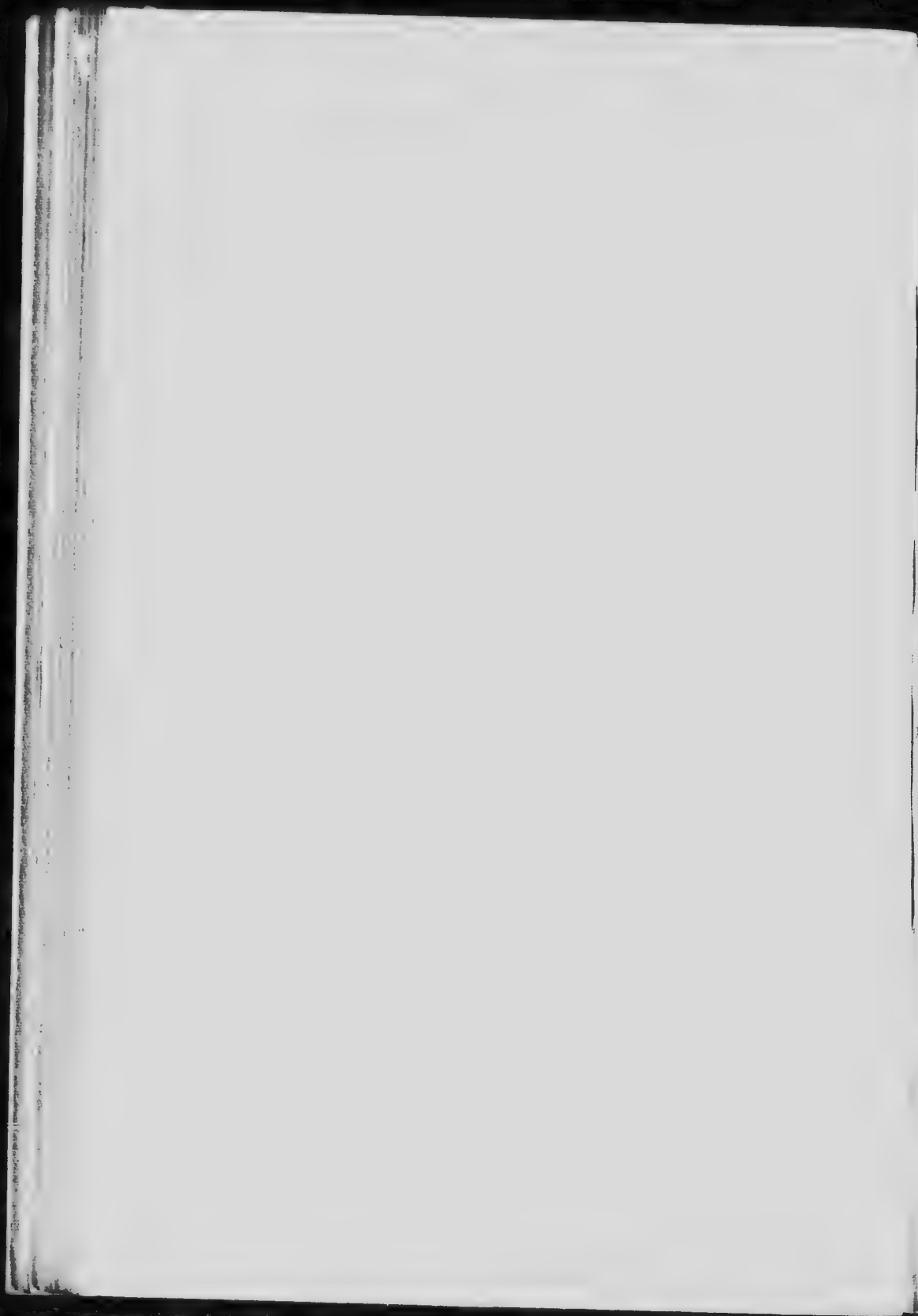
When I got back to my stable Eros and Chanticler noticed how upset I looked, and they were both very kind and listened with keen interest to all I had to tell.

Mother was very anxious about my poor mouth, which was still sore and swollen; but Ricketts bathed it again, and by evening it was so much better that I was quite able to enjoy the extra nice bran-mash he brought me.

Before I went to sleep master came to my stable to see me, and he patted my head and slightly rearranged the rug on my back, much to Minnie's annoyance, who was already sound asleep. She always jumped up the moment Ricketts covered me, and settled herself on my back for the night; and if master or any of his friends came to look at me and happened to disturb her, she was very angry, unless she got some special notice too, when she would condescend to rouse herself, stand on my back and purr



MINNIE, WHO SLEEPS ON THE ELF'S BACK EVERY NIGHT.



loudly as much as to say, "Am I not a beautiful cat? The Elf is all very well, and her back makes me a nice warm bed ; but I am more handsome than she is."

So thought pussy ; but I am sure master wouldn't have come to the stables just to see her.

CHAPTER V.

INTRODUCING INVICTA AND BARNEY.

A SHORT time after the unpleasant experience I have just told you about, I had a long talk with my friend Invicta, and learnt a lot of useful information from her.

She is two years older than I am, and had been at the Horse Show in London the year before.

She was shown in the novice class for trotters, that is, a class for horses which have never won a prize.

Invicta got the first prize, and this fact made her very proud of herself, and she loved talking to me about it. I was a patient listener and anxious to learn all I could about shows and prizes, and so Invicta naturally liked talking to me.

I asked her if she had ever won a prize for driving horses, and then she explained

that she could not be shown in any of these classes because her tail is long, and she also told me that only horses whose tails have been chopped very short are allowed to take part in the driving competitions.

I wondered why neither my master nor Invicta had had our tails cut short. Mine nearly touches the ground, as you can see from my picture, and Invicta's actually lies two inches on it when she stands still.

So I said to Invicta, "Do you know why your master has not had your tail cut, when having it long prevents you from being shown in classes in which I am sure you would more often than not win a first prize?"

"Oh, yes, I should just think I do know," said Invicta, "for my master thinks it is most cruel to chop off a horse's tail and thus deprive him of a natural and efficient protection from the flies which are such a pest and torment to him as soon as ever the weather begins to grow the least bit warm. Besides," continued Invicta, "the pain of having the tail chopped or 'docked,' as it is really called, is so dreadful, that the terrible memory of the operation never leaves the horse who has gone through it. You ask

our friend the Dandy to tell you about 'docking' the next time you see him, for he can speak from bitter experience."

His mistress, Lady Durand, thinks both he and poor Czarina look awfully smart with their ugly little stumps, all that is now left of their once beautiful tails.

I had always thought the Dandy's tail very unbecoming, but I had no idea until Invicta, and afterwards he himself, told me of the suffering he had been compelled to go through to obtain such a hideous—for it really was hideous—result. Just fancy, little readers, having to bear being tortured to produce not only disfigurement but misery and pain for the rest of life.

"If a great beauty of appearance or a lasting good were the result of 'docking,' it would perhaps be worth enduring, but," said Invicta, "Dandy told me only the other day that life to him now is scarcely worth living, and that often, when he is nearly mad with irritation and stinging pain from the flies, he wishes that he were dead. And all this to satisfy a lady's craze to follow one of the most uncivilised and inhuman fashions of the day."

I made up my mind to question the Dandy the very next time I saw him, and I thanked Invicta for what she had told me. I felt I was old enough now to know more about the horse world than I could ever learn in my sheltered, happy home, with the best and most humane of masters.

Soon after this Invicta's master appeared and drove her off, and mine came to take me out for my usual morning training. I went very well that day in spite of a mind full of what I had just heard, and after a short time master let me saunter lazily down the road, for it was a hot and tiring day. As we went slowly along we met a dear little girl, and I noticed that she was eating a bun.

Being very fond of children, I went as close to her as I could and neighed. This always delights children and they tell each other that I am talking, and so I am. If they are eating bread and butter or cake I neigh: "Please spare me a little piece," and they always hand out a generous half. This I take very gently, and as soon as my mouth is empty I neigh again, and this time I say, "Thank you very much, little friends."

The children are scarcely ever afraid when I make advances to them ; but sometimes the grown-ups with them are, as you will gather from what I am now going to tell you about the little girl with the bun.

When I advanced towards the child, she put out a tiny hand and gently stroked my nose, which she could just reach, and then, in answer to my neigh, " Please give me a little piece," she handed me all that was left of the bun.

I was just going to take it when I heard a loud frightened voice call out :

" Don't, Miss Marjorie, don't do that, the horse will bite you " ; and a nurse, wheeling a perambulator, rushed up and hastily drew child and bun away.

Master apologised, and I looked reproachfully at the nurse.

I didn't mind about not having the bun ; but I did mind very much that anyone should think I would hurt a little child.

Marjorie noticed my sad expression, and with a " Please let me, Nannie," she once more held towards me the piece of bun.

Master told the nurse about my fondness

for little humans, and when she saw how very gently I took the bun from Marjorie, she grew quite brave and even ventured to stroke my neck herself. Marjorie patted me with her little hands, and when once or twice I licked them she cried out, joyfully :

"Nannie, the dear horsie are tissing me."

Then the baby awoke, and sitting up in his perambulator he stretched out two chubby hands towards me and lisped :

"Baba tiss gee-gee, Baba wants tiss, gee-gee"; and he would not be satisfied until the nurse lifted him into her arms and let him stroke me or rather, I should say, embrace me.

The dear little man didn't know what fear meant, and after hanging on to my neck for a few minutes he pushed one fat little hand right into my mouth, saying :

"Baba feel gee-gee's tootsies," and caught hold of my forelock with the other and tugged at it vigorously, cooing loudly the while in blissful satisfaction with his achievements.

Marjorie gently unclasped the tight little

fingers which had now caught hold of my long mane, and then very reluctantly baby allowed himself to be put back in his perambulator, and with great waving of hands my little friends went on their way, and master took me home.

When we reached the stable yard we found Ricketts and two or three of the other men in a state of great excitement.

Ricketts held an empty pie-dish in his hand, and he was gazing in astonished amazement at Barney, master's favourite black retriever, who was wagging his tail vigorously and looking both important and pleased with himself.

"What is it, Ricketts?" asked master.

"Well, sir," said the man, "I was very busy this morning and I quite forgot about poor Barney's dinner. I generally go to the tool-shed to fetch this here pie-dish about twelve o'clock, and Barney always goes with me to get it and follows me to the kitchen to ask cook for his dinner. As I said, I quite forgot the dog this morning, and so I suppose poor Barney got tired of waiting, for cook says about a quarter-past twelve Barney appeared at the kitchen

door carrying this pie-dish in his mouth. He placed it down before her as he had seen me do, and waited for her to fill it with scraps and then very carefully took it between his teeth, marched off to the yard again, and enjoyed his dinner. I was just telling the men about Barney's cleverness when you appeared, sir," said Ricketts.

Master was deeply interested in all Ricketts told him, and for several days he took up a position in the tool-shed where he could see Barney but not be seen, and watched him perform his clever trick.

The dog always waited about for Ricketts until well after twelve, and then when he did not appear, as it was arranged he should not, master saw Barney put one paw on the dish to tilt it up and then take it in his mouth and march off to the kitchen to ask cook for his dinner; and you may be sure his silent, eloquent appeal never passed unnoticed, for cook was just the kindest creature living, and Evelyn was often able to coax dainty morsels out of her for us.

When master told Barney's former owner about his clever trick, the man was very much interested, and said to master :

"How very curious, for Bruin, Barney's father, did the same trick, and yet Barney never saw him do it. It is a pure case of heredity."

CHAPTER VI.

I ASK THE DANDY ABOUT HIS RIDICULOUS LITTLE STUMP OF A TAIL.

NOT very long after my talk with Invicta Dandy brought his master and mistress to see mine, and while they were having a chat Dandy was put into a stall in my stable. It was a hot day and the flies were very tiresome. They bothered poor Dandy so much that he could not stand still. He kept stamping his feet, and once or twice I thought I heard him give a low moan as if in pain.

At last I said, "What is the matter, Dandy?"

He looked up surprised, and asked me how I knew his name. I told him that my friend Invicta had pointed him out to me, and that she had told me he could tell me all about the barbarous docking practice.

"Hateful subject," snapped the Dandy, in a gruff, irritable voice; and he began to stamp again.

"Do tell me all you can, dear Dandy," I pleaded, "for I often hear master and Ricketts talking on the subject. My master wants the docking of horses to be stopped altogether, and I want to help him by explaining to the children who read this story exactly what it means to the poor horses who are deprived of their tails. I really want to know how you and so many of the horses I meet come to have such miserable little stumps instead of a beautiful long tail like mine. I know they have been docked; but I don't yet quite understand what the word means. See how easily I can sweep off the flies which are extra tiresome this afternoon, and which I can see are nearly worrying you to death, poor Dandy."

When I first noticed horses with queer stumpy tails I thought they must have been born like that, for it never entered my head that the humans for whom we do so much, no animals more, could wantonly deprive any of us of part and, in many cases, nearly

all of one of our most necessary and useful members.

"You thought we were born like this," said the Dandy, in a voice of disgust, giving his ridiculous little stump an angry jerk. "You were never more mistaken in your life; neither I nor the many almost tailless horses you meet so constantly in the streets were born like this. No!" and his voice rose in indignation, "I and they have suffered unforgettable tortures at the hand of man, for we have all gone through the great degradation of being docked."

"Do explain all about it to me, dear Dandy," said, deeply interested and keen to hear more.

My request gave the poor fellow an opportunity to relieve his nervous, irritated feelings, and he poured out the following all too true details of what he had gone through, merely, in his case, to satisfy a woman's craze for fashion.

"You want to know why I have a thing like this for a tail," and he gave the offending stump another angry wriggle. "Well, I will tell you.

"My mistress was really to blame, and

yet I cannot think she meant to be cruel, for she was always kind to both Czarina and me, and I believe it was want of imagination and thought which made her give Jenkins leave to have our tails docked when he told her that it was not the fashion now for horses to have long tails. She simply did not realise how a horse's natural tail is reduced to a thing like mine. Jenkins knew what was the right thing, and so she left it to him. He told her 'docking' was fashionable, and she felt she must keep up-to-date, whatever the cost. In her gay, frivolous life she had not time to enter into details with Jenkins, who, if the truth were known, was too lazy to bestow on our tails the little extra attention their length made necessary. There was no excuse of ignorance for him. He knew only too well what Czarina and I would have to go through when our tails were docked. Oh, how the time comes back to me, I remember everything so clearly. I was nearly a year old, and my friend Czarina and I were roaming lazily about in the rich grassy meadow belonging to Durand Towers, in happy ignorance of our pending fate, when one morning my mistress came into the field to

look at us. She was accompanied by a lady and a beautiful little girl of about six years old.

"'What do you think of the Dandy?' I heard my mistress say, and I pricked up my ears, for I liked to know what people thought about me. The lady said I was very handsome and she admired my mane and tail, which were really wonderful for my age.

"'Oh,' answered my mistress, 'Jenkins has just been advising me to have both the Dandy and Czarina docked. He tells me that the smartest thing now is to drive horses with very short tails indeed.'

"'Oh, Lady Durand,' I heard the pretty little girl say as she turned her lovely eyes from admiring me, and looked into my mistress's face, 'Oh, please, please don't let Jenkins hurt dear Dandy and Czarina. Our groom, Evans, told me only the other day how dreadfully cruel it is to chop off poor horses' tails. "It hurts them just dreadfully," he said, "and when the flies come the poor things have no power to drive them away with their poor little stumps, and the pain and irritation send them nearly mad," so please, Lady Durand, do tell

Jenkins not to let Dandy and Czarina be hurt,' and she patted us gently with her dear little hands. 'Mother,' and she looked at the lady standing beside my mistress, 'says she wouldn't have one of our dear horse's tails chopped off for anything.

"In her eagerness to protect us the little girl's voice grew excited and rather loud with indignation, and I heard the sweet lady she had called 'mother' say softly,

"'Speak gently, Betty darling.'

"'Oh, mummie,' said the child, contrite in a moment, 'have I been talking not nicely. I am so very sorry,' and she tried to put her little hand into that of my mistress as she sweetly asked her forgiveness, and pleaded again that Czarina and I should not have our tails hurt.

"I could see that my mistress was annoyed, and when I heard her say in rather a hard, cold voice, 'Little girls should not think that they know better than older people,' I felt very sorry for Betty, who was so anxious for our welfare and happiness.

"I noticed the troubled look she turned towards her mother, and I feel sure I saw

tears in her beautiful eyes. An understanding and sympathetic glance passed between the mother and child, and then they both took leave of my mistress, and Czarina and I were left to ponder on the conversation we had just heard, and to wonder what was about to happen to us.

"We were not left long in ignorance, for the very next morning our mistress again came into the paddock, and this time Jenkins came with her. Presently, we heard him say :

" 'Yes, your ladyship, it is certainly time them there horses was docked, and they will make a fine pair to enter in the driving classes when they get a bit older.'

" 'I will see Mr. Atkinson about the matter to-day.'

"Now both Czarina and I hated Mr. Atkinson. He was the veterinary surgeon, and had attended us both two or three times before. He was very rough, and spoke in a loud, gruff voice and pulled us about so much that we really both dreaded and feared his visits."

At this moment, Dandy's master and mistress appeared, and I was very dis-

appointed to have our conversation interrupted at such a very interesting point ; but Dandy told me he knew he was coming again shortly and he promised to take up his story at the very place where he had been obliged to leave off in order to take his master and mistress home again.

"Now for a little practice, Elf," said my master, when he had seen the Durands off. "I hear the Dandy and Czarina are to do wonders at the next Horse Show, and although I wouldn't for all the prizes in the world, as you know, Elf"—and here master caressed my head which I had managed to place on his shoulder—"allow any one of you to be mutilated like the poor Dandy and his mate Czarina, I want you to come out well in the classes you may enter."

"I know, master," I neighed, "and we will all do our very best for you in the classes which do not require us to be fashioned by the hand of man, but are content to receive us in the beautiful natural state in which we were born"; and then master and I started off, and presently I heard the familiar hoot of a motor-horn. I loved racing motors and always tried to beat

them as I do boys on bicycles ; but I have not succeeded yet, only I hope to do so some day. When I hear the horn I always answer by a neigh.

If children are in the car, I feel sure they tell the chauffeur to go on sounding the horn for the fun of hearing my answer, because I always notice many more hoots come from the cars which carry one or more little humans than from those filled only by grown-up people.

Of course I did not beat the motor, even though I did try specially hard that day ; but I don't mean to give up trying.

When I got back to my stable I told Eros and Chanticler, who had returned during my absence, about the Dandy's visit. They were very much interested to hear about him because they knew how much Lord Durand expected of both him and Czarina at the forthcoming London Horse Show, and Invicta had told us how difficult they had both been to manage the year before. In fact, the Dandy had been so restive that he had run great risk of being turned out of the ring in disgrace.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DANDY TELLS THE ELF ABOUT A VERY BITTER EXPERIENCE.

As the Dandy had foretold, he was not long in again bringing his master to see mine. This time he came without Lady Durand, and guessing that he would not be wanted to take his master home again for at least a couple of hours, he said he would finish telling me how he was deprived of his once beautiful tail. I was all eagerness to hear all he had to tell, and so was Eros, who this time was with us in the stable.

Minnie lay at my feet, and curled herself up into a soft, furry ball, and listened intently to all the Dandy had to say. He began :

"It was on the very next morning after the visit of my mistress and Jenkins to our

field, and Czarina and I were again discussing the conversation we had overheard concerning our tails. When Jenkins came to fetch me, I followed him quite unsuspectingly, for of course I thought I was only wanted for my usual morning toilet, but when we came in sight of the harness room, and I saw Atkinson standing at the door, I began to tremble with fear, and to hang back.

"'Come on, Dandy,' said Jenkins, 'we are going to make such a smart boy of you, and later on, when you and Czarina are in harness, you will be one of the most fashionable pairs going,' and then he took hold of my long flowing mane and dragged me, not unkindly, forward.

"Atkinson came to meet us, and together they took me into a kind of shed. I was then really frightened, for I did not know what was going to happen to me; and I became very restive. The first thing Atkinson did was to secure me firmly by a twitch on my nose; he next raised one of my forelegs until it touched my breast, and Jenkins was ordered to tie it tightly in place."

"What an awful position in which to have to stand!" both Eros and I here exclaimed.

"It was dreadful," answered the Dandy. "I was forced to stand patiently on my three legs, and to keep my head practically still, for every time I moved I suffered tortures from the cruel twitch on my nose.

"Then the clip, clip, clip of scissors began, and the long flowing hairs of my beautiful tail were cut off to the bone, and also all the hair round the stump, and a piece of catgut or string was tied very firmly above the bones, or vertebræ, which Atkinson thought it necessary to cut off in order to make my tail a fashionable length. Patient and still from sheer desperation, and indeed unable to be otherwise, I awaited the opinion of Jenkins as to whether her ladyship would, or would not, think that my tail was being curtailed enough to be quite smart and correct.

"Jenkins answer being in the negative, another piece of catgut was tied a little higher up the bone.

"When Jenkins had quite made up his mind about the length which my mistress

would consider right for my tail to be, the piece of bone below the catgut was quickly chopped off with a very sharp knife.

"I could not help screaming, the pain was so very terrible, and I was so dreadfully frightened, for I did not know what would happen next. The sweat was dripping from my poor cowering body and falling like great drops of rain upon the floor. The smeared steel instrument and the stains of blood which met my dim and suffering gaze as soon as I could raise my poor head were silent, though eloquent, witnesses of the crime which had been committed upon me."

"Crime," echoed Eros and I.

"Yes, crime," said the Dandy, "you suffer as I suffered then, or witness such suffering, and I feel sure you will agree with me that no gentler word can be used with reference to such a cruel and barbarous practice. If the docking of horses is not a crime then the word has lost its dictionary meaning, which is 'sin,' and the laws against cruelty are worthless, for surely 'docking' must stand well to the front as a 'pitiless sin.'

"It is true, indeed, that my once beautiful tail was reduced to the kind of house-maid's brush it now resembles by the best and quickest of means, for although I hated Atkinson, he was too good a veterinary surgeon to use any but the best and cleanest of instruments for his work ; but I know that many and many a horse has his tail shortened in a very rough-and-ready way ; and has to go through the whole terrible business, sometimes unnecessarily prolonged, with senses all too keenly alert from fear, and when I think of their sufferings, as compared with what I myself went through, I feel powerless to describe the tortures they must have suffered, for words impressive enough quite fail me.

"To stop the bleeding of my poor maimed stump, all that was then left of the tail, which had been such a comfort and blessing to me when the flies were about, a white-hot iron was pressed against it, and the smell of my charred bone sickened me almost to faintness."

"Poor, poor Dandy," Eros and I murmured sympathetically, for so graphic had he become in recounting his experiences, that

he almost gave us the impression that he was going through the whole terrible time again.

The lapse of years had blotted none of its tragedy from the memory which is ever vividly retentive in all horses, and accounts much for the characteristic timidity so peculiar to them.

"The remembrance of that ghastly experience, besides never leaving my mind," continued the Dandy, "fills me even now with daily dread lest anything or anybody should hurt again the poor miserable bit of a stump I have left, to say nothing of the agony I suffer when the flies are about.

"The irremediable wrong which man has done to me, and to so many of my kind, in depriving us of the only weapon horses have with which to protect themselves from these cruel and almost intolerable pests, fills me with the despair of utter helplessness, and often drives me to the point of distraction.

"Now, dear Elf, have you heard enough to make you able to plead with the human children we both love so much to help us in our crusade against the cruel practice of docking?"

"Indeed I have, Dandy; for now I feel I thoroughly understand about one of the most, if not quite the most, brutal, barbarous and cruel practices of mankind against his most faithful, noble, useful, and enduring of friends. A practice degrading in the extreme, not only to the poor helpless creatures practised upon, but infinitely more degrading to the practitioner, and to those who give authority and permission for the operation to be performed on their horses. Man, with his superior gifts, his higher intellect, his form made in the image of God, and only a little lower than the angels, by countenancing or allowing such cruelty in the animal world, surely falls from his high position, and sinks, not a little, lower than the brute beasts he tortures or allows to be tortured."

Little children, I am sure you know the motto, "Silence gives consent," so you and I must raise our voices in protest against this great wrong, lest we too seem to be approving of the cruel practice.

Master feels sure that many of the humans do nothing just because they don't realise what docking real' means.

The stable-lads advocate the practice, because otherwise they would have to spend a few minutes, only a very few, longer over the toilet of each horse under their care, and many of them are too lazy to do this for the friend who will willingly carry them over many a weary mile to deliver a note for the master, or fetch the doctor in case of illness. The friend who makes no demur if the weather is cold and stormy, or if a blazing sun is shining; in fact, I think I may say truthfully, the only friend who gives his services cheerfully in spite of storm and sunshine, heat and cold. Man is the master of the horse; would he were always good and kind like mine.

Soon after the Dandy had finished his story, my master and his came into the stable.

Dandy's master looked critically at me, and then he said:

"I see you don't dock your horses, Ingram."

"No," said my master, "and I wish, Durand, with all my heart I could persuade you to my way of thinking."

"Well, old fellow, I am not sure that I

am not with you. It's the wife who is so keen to be in the fashion," answered Lord Durand. "She is very proud of the Dandy and Czarina, and loves driving the pair herself; but I never have a moment's peace when she is out with them, until I see her safely back again, they are such restive, highly-strung creatures, especially the Dandy here."

"He looks it," said my master kindly, patting dear, sensitive Dandy on the back. "You ought to be very careful indeed who drives him, especially when the flies are about; he must suffer so terribly with no means to protect himself from their persistent onslaught."

Master was standing near me, so I rubbed my nose against him, and softly neighed.

"You are quite right about the Dandy, master; he is awfully nervous, and the flies nearly drive him mad."

"That's a fine mare of yours, Ingram, and she does seem fond of you," said Lord Durand, as he took the Dandy's reins in his hand.

"Yes, I think the Elf is a bit partial to me," answered master; and I looked up into

Lord Durand's face and said, just as plainly as ever I could, "I should think I am fond of master; who wouldn't be?"

At this moment Minnie rushed out of the stable, and without any warning, went up quite close to the Dandy, flaunted her beautiful bushy tail in the air, and gently rubbed her back against his hind legs. I trembled with fear, for I thought the Dandy would surely kick out at the little intruder; but strangely enough he never moved.

Pussy's was an act of silent sympathy, for in spite of flaunting her lovely tail in front of the almost tailless Dandy, I am sure that the little act was meant to show him that she had not listened to the story of his sufferings unmoved, and she wanted him to know that she was sorry for him. Instinctively the Dandy must have felt this, or Minnie would scarcely have escaped unhurt from within such near reach of those nervous, restive legs.

Master quickly lifted Minnie into his arms to be out of danger, and then Lord Durand and the Dandy went quickly off, leaving me a much wiser horse, and Eros too, for all he had told us.

I felt more strongly than ever that I must reach the hearts of the children to help me to help master in his great work for the benefit of the poor unfortunate horses, whose owners, if they think at all, think not as my master does on the subject of docking.

Children, with your dear, tender hearts, your warm, loving, sympathetic natures, I, the Elf, appeal to you in the cause of my many sadly-mutilated brothers and sisters, and before I end my story, I will put before you a few (for I do not want to worry you unnecessarily) practical ways in which even the very tiniest of you can help to further this great humane cause.

CHAPTER VIII.

INTRODUCING TINY AND CLASPER.

TINY, as her name denotes, was very small and a bay like myself. She was quite the smallest pony I have ever seen, and as people made a good deal of fuss over her on this account, she liked being small and was very proud of herself, and sometimes put on great airs before Eros, Chanticler, and myself.

Chanticler and Eros were just amused at the silly little thing and laughed at her, but I didn't like it when she came up to me, and tossing her proud little head in the air would say :

"Well, Elf, how many sweet things have you made master carry back to the house this week, only to take them a little later on from Evelyn?"

Her impudence and rudeness made my blood boil, and I felt furious with her. The insinuation was so horrid and low down, and I am sure it all came out of her jealousy of me. She thought as she was so small that master ought to love her best, and when she saw me refuse the good things master used to bring to me, before I made him understand that I didn't want them from him, and that I only wanted him to love and be loved by him, she called me stupid and silly, and said I was most selfish not to think of her, and that if I didn't want the sweet things master brought for me, I might at least take them and keep them for her, because I knew how much she loved sugar and nice things to eat. Of course I did know this only too well, for the year before poor Tiny had been very ill, so ill that she nearly died.

It happened in this way. Tiny had been to the big Horse Show in London, and her extreme smallness, as usual, gained for her a lot of attention. She was fed with sweets and cakes of every description, and petted and spoiled to her heart's content.

I remember so well how cross and irritable she was when she came home from the

Show, and she was so rude to my mother, Lady Beechwood, that even Chanticler was roused and gave her a good scolding.

Tiny didn't care a bit, however, and when she saw master petting me she tried to draw his attention upon herself; but he only gave her one or two hasty pats and then left us. Tiny was furious and she called master an old silly, and said, "Why didn't he bring me something nice to eat, when I have been at the Show all day? I wouldn't have bothered him to carry it back to the house"; and she glared meaningly at me.

It was a very good thing master didn't think of bringing anything for Tiny that evening, for the truth was she had really over eaten herself at the Show, and I expect this was the reason for her extreme naughtiness. Ricketts had a good deal of trouble in getting her to bed, and during the night she became very ill indeed. I think she really must have been in terrible pain, for she groaned so loudly that she awoke both Eros and me, and we heard Ricketts go quickly to her, to find out what was the matter. For a long time Tiny was very sick, and she became so weak and exhausted that Ricketts

thought she would die, for I heard him tell master so the next morning.

Master was very much annoyed when he found out about the over-feeding, and said to Ricketts, "The next time Tiny goes to a show, please see that she has a big notice put over her box, asking the people to be kind enough not to give her any sweets or other things to eat."

I should have almost died with shame had I been Tiny and been threatened with such a notice; but when she heard about it she just laughed, and said, "If master thinks he will do me out of good things to eat in that way, he is jolly well mistaken, for lots of the children, and certainly those who gave me the most to eat, were much too small to read any stupid notices."

Eros and I both thought they would possibly have someone with them who could read, but we forbore to say so, as poor Tiny was still weak and limp from her recent illness. Sometimes I tried to talk to Tiny when she said nasty things about dear master, but I never could get her to see how mean it was of her to fuss over him as she always did whenever she got the chance,

and then to speak as she so often did behind his back. Perhaps it was because she is so very small, and cannot understand like Eros and I do. When quite full grown, Tiny was scarcely bigger than master's St. Bernard dog Nero, of whom you shall hear more later, and if you look at her in the picture, taken when she was a baby, you will see that the hound Clasper, whom Ricketts is holding by his chain, is nearly as big as she is.

Some time after Tiny had been made so ill at the Horse Show, master sold her, and she went to a new home to become the pet and plaything of some of the very children who had given her so many good things to eat the preceding year. Fascinated by her size, these little people had given their father and mother no peace until Tiny became their very own property.

Little Evelyn Ricketts was very sorry when Tiny went away, for master had let her drive the minute creature whenever she wished to do so. Harnessed to one of the smallest of speed wagons, into which Evelyn could just squeeze herself, she and her brother John, who makes such a brave looking Tiger

in his very correct livery, spent many happy hours in driving Tiny about.

Just before Tiny said good-bye to us, which she did in her usual little don't care manner, master had her photographed with her two small playfellows, and this "study in miniature" you will find in my book, and then you will be able to see for yourselves what Tiny looks like.

Clasper is a foxhound, and he and I always have been and still are, great friends, and often after a good day's sport he will creep into my stable in the evening and tell me all about the fun. He and Minnie like each other, too, and she is always glad when Clasper comes, and curls herself up against his back.

Master uses Clasper for drag hunting, a very humane form of sport, for in it no living creature is chased and run to ground, but only the strong scent of a trail is followed. A piece of rag is dipped in aniseed, and a man, who has generally about half an hour's start given to him, makes the trail by dragging the soaked piece of rag along the ground. When the half-hour is up, the hounds are let loose, Clasper amongst

TINY, RICKETS, AND CLASPER.



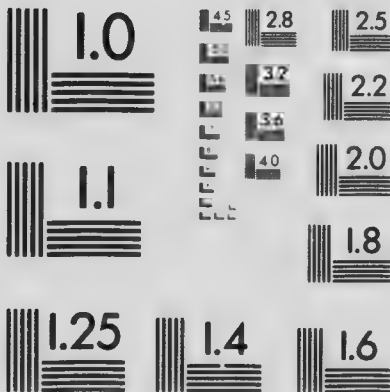
Hugh Penfold]

RICKETS'S THREE DAUGHTER IVELYN DRIVING TINY.



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them, and they, with master and his friends on horseback, begin the hunt.

Most of the hounds enjoy the sport thoroughly, but not so my friend Clasper, who, low be it spoken, is really a very lazy fellow indeed. Instead of giving all his attention to the trail, Master Clasper is invariably wondering how soon the motor car will appear in sight, which is always sent to some place on the route to take master and his friends home again. By having the car to fetch the humans back again the tired, though of course not by any means over-tired, horses are relieved of their burdens and are allowed to return leisurely home.

Directly the lazy Clasper catches sight of the motor car any interest he has had in the hunt goes at once, and his one idea is to reach the car, jump into it, and there await dear master and his friends. When they arrive he gives them such a nice welcome that they forget to reproach him for his laziness, and he manages to get a very fair amount of the attention we all so dearly love for himself.

I think we all rather vie with each other

in trying to get as much of master for ourselves as we can, and I must confess that I am very lucky in that respect.

When Clasper came to the stable to recount the doings of the day, he told me that one of his friends, called Damien, had once taken part in one of the famous Grasmere hound trails.

"Do tell me what he told you, Clasper," I said ; and Clasper, nothing loath, for he was really very comfortable in the stable, and Minnie was keeping his back very warm, began :

"Every year, in the month of August, when the beautiful little village of Grasmere is gay with visitors, one day is set apart for its world-famed sports, and the hound trail, together with the guides' race, are the two most important events of the day.

"For the former a man goes off in the usual way, with a long rag soaked in aniseed and all the hounds are held in leash in the ring until the man returns. Directly they begin to smell the scent of the aniseed they get very excited and are quite difficult to hold in until the man who has been making the trail returns into the ring.

"As soon as he reappears the signal is given for the hounds to start, and Damien says it is considered a very pretty sight to see them go with great leaps and bounds, keenly following the trail.

"In the hilly country of Westmorland the maker of the trail gives a very varied route, and the hounds in their search for it rush up the grassy fells and then down again to the vale beneath with lightning speed. Over high walls and low they spring with perfect ease, and the one who first enters the ring again wins the prize, amidst the cheering and clapping of a huge and enthusiastic crowd.

"Damien also told me," continued Clasper, "that people come from far and near to see the pretty sight, attracted no doubt partly by the extreme beauty of the little village and its surroundings. The lake, with its lovely little island almost in the centre, is most beautiful and picturesque, and lies nestling amidst some of the finest and most varied of the wonderful Westmorland hills. It is an ideal spot for the trail, and the hounds in their speedy flight after the scent they love to follow are often and again

momentarily lost to sight, only to reappear again in a marvellous way, and remind one of the very fells they traverse, whose lofty summits disappear from time to time into a veil of mist, and suddenly reappear again, grander, and, if possible, more beautiful than before.

"The vale in its gentler beauty is a veritable garden of the Lord, each man in the place an under-gardener, keeping his own little corner bright and gay with those hardy annuals and brilliant rock flowers of the district, ever proud and anxious to preserve the unique loveliness of his own particular spot in the vast natural garden, spreading over the greater part of Westmorland and Cumberland. The mountainous and gloriously wonderful scenery, gathered so closely together in that far off corner in the north-west of England, is ever an eloquent though silent proof of the almighty power and super-human skill of the Master Gardener."

Clasper told me that his friend grew quite poetic in describing the great beauties of his former home, and I longed to make the acquaintance of Damien, little guessing then

how I should do so, or how useful he was one day to be to me, in giving me details of the marvellous endurance of many of the horses used for the coaches in the hilly lake district.

Here Clasper got up and gave himself a stretch, and Ricketts just then appearing at the stable door, called him to go to his own apartment for the night.

CHAPTER IX.

INVICTA GIVES THE ELF FURTHER INFORMATION.

ONE morning, not long after my talk with Clasper, Lord and Lady Durand passed the park gates, in their smart little carriage, to which the Dandy and Czarina were harnessed, tandem-fashion, just as master and I were going out for our usual exercise.

The great Show day was drawing very near, and we were all growing most excited about it.

When Lord Durand saw us, he pulled up, and tried to talk to master ; but the Dandy wouldn't stand still, even for a moment, and I really believe it was simply because he couldn't. The day was very hot, and the numberless flies mercilessly tortured his poor, unprotected body. Master jumped

out of the light cart to which I was harnessed, and went and stood by the Dandy's head. He talked to him soothingly, and gently stroked his proud, beautiful neck, but I saw that master's kind words and loving caresses, the panacea to all troubles in our stables, could not make the fine, highly-strung Dandy forget—no, not even momentarily—the misery of his sufferings.

With shortened mane, and only a stump for a tail, the poor animal was absolutely defenceless against the furious onslaught of the many relentless insects buzzing about on that hot summer day, driving him nearly mad from irritation and pain by their persistent attacks. It was impossible for my master and Dandy's to have any conversation, for try as he would, my poor friend could not stand still, and Czarina was very restive too, though she was not quite so sensitive as her cruelly afflicted mate, for she was less finely bred. I wondered whatever would happen on the Show day, for the Dandy's nerves were in such an incessant state of irritation, that he seemed quite deaf to anything his master said to him.

With an impatient movement of the reins, Lord Durand drove on, and master came to me and patted my back. He praised me, and called me "good" for waiting so quietly for him to come to me again. I nestled my head on his shoulder, and tried to explain that of course it was quite easy for me to stand still, for my head, neck, and body were well protected from onslaughts by a fly-net, and my tail, uninjured by the hand of man, was quite capable of stunning and driving away any flies which were silly enough to think they would find a resting-place on my legs.

Master pressed his dear hands lovingly against me, in response to the explanation I had tried to neigh to him and, as he gently fingered my forelocks, said in a voice full of sympathy and pity :

"Ah, Elf, you don't know what poor Dandy has suffered, and all he still has to bear from the flies with only that house-maid's brush of a tail all he has left with which to defend himself from their cruel and perpetual bites and stings."

I neighed, "I think I do understand a little, master, for the Dandy told me only

the other day all about the docking of his tail and his terrible experiences since. While Lord Durand was talking to you, Ricketts put the Dandy into one of the empty boxes in my stable to rest ; but the poor fellow couldn't get either rest or ease, and kept stamping about. He apologised to me for all the noise he was making, but explained that he really couldn't help it, for the flies would give him no peace. I asked him why he didn't switch them off as I do, and he gave me one of his sweet, sad, appealing looks and answered, 'How can I, Elf?' and he pathetically turned his head and looked towards his poor bit of a tail. I felt very sorry for my tactless remark, and I could almost have cried, dear master, when I saw tears of pain standing in the beautiful brown eyes of my poor suffering friend."

"I know, I know, Elf," answered master in his understanding, sympathetic way ; and after letting his face rest against mine for a moment, he gathered up my reins and we started off for our drive.

When master brought me home again, and I was cosily settled in my beautiful box, Mother, Eros, Chanticler, and I discussed

all that the Dandy had told us about himself.

We had all noticed that the cows we met on the roads were none of them deprived of their tails, like nearly every horse we saw outside the park gates, and mother said "she couldn't think why horses were so generally docked, and their lives thus made almost intolerable. She also said that their powers of usefulness are greatly lessened, and many serious accidents caused by them in their efforts to run away from the recalled memories of suffering, if a rein or anything else happens just to touch the poor maimed tail. Nature intended it to be both beautiful and useful, but man, in nine cases out of every ten in our noble free English land, has rendered it useless and an eyesore; while in America, not one horse in every hundred is deprived of his tail."

Mother knew about my story, and she told me all this to help me, that I might be able to bring this fact seriously home to my little English readers, and point out the great opportunity for a most humane work which lies before them, so that in the years to come, they may do much to blot out this

stain, which every horse-loving English man, woman, and child must feel a disgrace to his country.

I asked mother if she thought it was only for smartness and fashion that the greater number of people had their horses docked, and she said that there were several other reasons which she had heard mentioned from time to time; and advised me to talk to Invicta about them, as she was much better up in the details than she was herself.

I was rather disappointed that mother would not go on talking, and began to grumble a little bit to Eros; but he only said, "I cannot help thinking about those poor horses we have sometimes seen struggling to get away from their drivers. I always thought they must be nasty-tempered creatures, and I had no idea that in their mad flight they might be trying to run away from pain, that wonderful unsolved mystery."

Eros' words made me stop grumbling, and that night, when Minnie heaved her usual sigh of content, as she settled herself to sleep on my back, I thought again of the

great mystery of pain, and I wondered how man, the god of the animal world, could belittle himself so frequently by inflicting it on so many of my unfortunate brothers and sisters.

The next time I saw Invicta, I told her all that the Dandy had told me about his experience of docking.

"Isn't it a dreadful story, Elf," she answered, in reply to all I had told her, and you may be quite sure, little people, that I heartily agreed with her.

Invicta's indignation was as great as my own, and I had to wait patiently for her to quieten the memories my comments had renewed before I could put my further questions to her. Then I said :

"Please, Invicta, will you tell me all you can about the other reasons which people, when questioned, give as excuses for having their horses docked, besides the truly contemptible one, as in the case of the Dandy, which comes under the degradingly petty heading, 'It is the fashion?'"

"Gladly," answered my friend ; "but I will tell you in the very beginning that not one of them will bear investigation, or stand

the searching light of Truth, and in a great majority of cases the offenders are obliged to take refuge, if indeed a refuge can be found, in the deplorable reply of an unforgivable ignorance, 'It is the custom.'"

"I want to know just everything you can tell me, Invicta, on this subject, for I in my turn want to tell the children of the human world, and obtain their help in abolishing once and for all this cruel practice, and of course I must be quite fair; and if the supporters of docking have even one leg to stand upon, well, I must not be the one to take it away, for, generally speaking, the human children are very just and very fair."

"If they have a leg to stand upon," sharply replied Invicta, "it is only kept upright by laziness, thoughtlessness, and selfishness, as I am sure you will see, dear Elf, as I go on. Perhaps the chief reason put forth for docking a horse's tail is, that it is much cleaner; but of course we all know that this reason is simply an excuse for laziness. It is quite easy for a groom to plait the long hair of the tail, and tie it up when the weather is dirty, that is, if it reaches anywhere near the ground." Here Invicta gave her own

beautiful tail a significant switch in the air, and I gazed admiringly at her, for she has the handsomest and longest tail of all my friends. "But," continued Invicta, "most grooms and stable-lads try to persuade their masters that docked tails are absolutely necessary, simply because they are too lazy to spend on the most faithful and enduring friend of man the little extra time and attention a long tail requires."

"I am surprised, Invicta," I answered, "that any educated man, who gives the subject a thought, can be made to believe such an erroneous statement; besides, even if it were true, surely there is some other remedy, more humane and more merciful, than depriving poor horses of their tails."

"Of course there is, Elf, and a very simple remedy too, for all the long hairs can be cut short right up to the end of the bone, making what is known as a bang tail. I have heard my master say that the late Queen Victoria had many of her horse's tails treated in this way. Of course cutting the hair like this takes away from the natural beauty of the tail, and makes it not quite so easy for the horse to switch off troublesome

flies ; but it does not injure the tail, and this is a very great reason in its favour. Moreover, when the horse is turned out to grass the hair soon grows afresh. Once a horse is deprived of his tail, he has no power of growing it again, and whatever his lot in life may be, he has from thenceforth to bear the torment of flies, and it is agony to him to be turned out to grass in the hot weather, and his, in most cases, well-earned rest is only a time of misery and pain.

"A docked mare can never be a really good mother, for she and her foal should practically live out of doors, and if the poor mother is exposed to the mercy of flies, she could be quite unable to feed her little foal, and it could only grow up feeble and delicate."

Here Invicta paused to take breath, and dear mother looked tenderly at Eros and me, and then Invicta said, having noticed mother's loving glance at us, "Yes, dear Lady Beechwood, you may certainly be proud of your two beautiful children.

"Another very ignorant reason given by many people for docking horses," continued

Invicta, "is that the operation strengthens the backbone. Now how, in the name of common sense, could this possibly be?" angrily asked Invicta, almost glaring at us in her indignation.

"Dear Invicta," I said, "you look at us as though we approved of such barbarity, and I can assure you that we are all feeling just as keenly on the subject as you are."

"I am sorry, Elf, but I feel so furious when I think of the stupidity of such a reason; and, indeed, if there were a particle of truth in the idea, wouldn't all poor horses, if given any voice in the matter, gladly bear this imaginary weakness of the back, rather than the terribly realistic misery the poor docked tail brings with it. The other day I heard your man Ricketts tell master's groom that two men had been fined, one five pounds and the other two pounds, for docking a horse in such a manner that the poor creature bled to death. Dreadful and cruel as the operation is, even when performed on foals, words cannot express the degrading brutality of its being allowed to be performed on horses, when all the bones are fixed and set."

"Why isn't there a law against docking?"

I asked Invicta, and she said :

"That's what people like your master and mine are asking daily, and making every effort to secure. There is a law against causing animals unnecessary suffering, but it is not yet recognized that docking is unnecessary, and only punishment is inflicted when death or grievous bodily harm follows, as in the case I have just mentioned.

"Life is hard and strenuous for the greater number of horses, but it is rendered a thousand times harder for them by the master who allows them to be docked, and it is humiliating in the extreme to realise that in this Christian England men are allowed to dock horses as their lives are drawing to a close, in order to secure an entirely imaginary increase of strength in their poor enduring backs.

"In the case quoted the owners had a most just reward, for He Who looks after the tiny sparrows and giveth life to all, in His far-seeing mercy took back the life He had given to these poor creatures, and left its owners not only horseless but having to pay a fine as well, which, in my master's

opinion, was all too small ; and I am sure, dear Elf, your master will agree with mine."

"I should just think he will," I answered.

"There are still one or two more foolish reasons which people give as an excuse for docking, but I must tell you about them the next time I come to see you all," said Invicta, "for I can hear my master's voice, and I expect that means he is nearly ready for me to take him home."

Then, as Ricketts led her off we called out, "Good-bye, Invicta," and begged her to come again as soon as she could.

Eros, mother, and I were much interested in all we now knew on the subject of docking, and I felt more keen than ever to impart my knowledge to the children in the world, for I know that they will want to help our cause when they thoroughly understand its object, which, to put briefly, is to make the docking of horses once and for all an illegal practice.

CHAPTER X.

TRAINING FOR THE SHOW.

I WAS very much interested when what I call my real training for the Show began. Of course for some time now I had been getting to go faster and faster ; but I could not go as quickly as my brother Eros, much to my disappointment. Master encouraged me in every possible way ; but he would never let me go on with my training if I seemed the least bit tired, and though I often felt that I should succeed in beating both Eros and Chanticler if I might have one more try, I always stopped when I heard master's "Woa" as he had taught me to do, for I wouldn't have disobeyed his dear voice, no, not to beat all the horses in the world.

Although master trained me to go very fast, he would never let me keep up the speed for more than a few hundred yards at

a time. He always urged me on with his voice, and as I have told you before never thought of using a whip, and I was made to rest after every fresh trial to get up greater speed.

Master made us all listen to all sorts of queer noises; to people talking loudly together; to a band playing every kind of music, first soft and low and soothing, then noisy, loud and startling; and one morning he fastened to the tail of each one of us a small tin biscuit box into which Ricketts had put a few stones. Every time we moved the stones bumped up and down, and the noise was awful.

Eros and Chanticler enjoyed the fun, and racing one after the other, made a tremendous clatter. I was frightened, and I didn't like to move because of the noise the stones made in the box fastened to my tail. I neighed to master to tell him how frightened I felt, and begged him to make Eros and Chanticler stand still and to take the tin away from my tail, for the noise really hurt my ears.

Master, however, was much too kind to take any notice of my fears beyond urging

me to move about, because he knew so well that at the Show I would have to listen to all sorts of weird cries and noises, and that if I didn't try to get used to them beforehand, I should be very frightened when the day came and might not be able to race properly. In answer to my appeal, for we never told him a trouble in vain, he patted my head and let me nestle against him for a few moments, and then made me move about as the others were doing with great zest.

By and by I began to mind the noise less and less, and in time my sensitive ears got quite accustomed to the most fearful racket which I think it possible for either three horses or three humans to produce. If my little readers are in any doubt about this noisiness, and think I am making an unnecessary fuss, I would suggest that one day, when they have the garden quite to themselves, that they go into the corner of it which is the very farthest away from the house, and try the tin box game. Please remember to go a long way from the house, little friends, or you may get into trouble with the big humans, and I don't want you to do that, or for them to think

badly of me for putting the idea into your heads, and also I don't want their ears to be hurt as mine were at first.

I and Eros and Chanticler very soon found that none of the noises hurt us, and when we got to the Show and heard the many various sounds there, we did not mind them at all, and were able to assure and comfort many of the friends we met there, who had not had a master to train them as ours had trained us.

After the tin box game, master tied reins loosely round our legs, and when we found that they did not hurt us in any way we just took no notice of them. Master also let the reins slip under our tails; but none of us minded in the least. We stood still and went on and did everything which master told us to do, just as though our reins were in the proper place. No one had ever hurt our tails, and when the reins touched them we were not afraid; but master tested us in these various ways so that we were prepared for almost any emergency which might happen to us. We always found that we remained unhurt, and we grew very brave and fearless and liked the fun of our training very much.

Our coats were always kept in beautiful order, so that they needed no special preparation for the Show. Master, as you may suppose, was most particular about our appearance; and Ricketts and the men under him just vied with each other in seeing who could get the most gloss on the coat of the special horse committed to his care.

Two days before the Show, when we went back to the stable-yard after our training, little Evelyn Ricketts ran up to me to give me a piece of sugar, and I heard her ask master how I had got on. She took the keenest interest in our preparations for the Show, and when we were dragging those tin boxes about, don't think anyone enjoyed the noise more than Evelyn did. She was very anxious that I should beat both Eros and Chanticler in the "American Trotting Class," for which we were all entered.

The Americans and Russians scarcely ever dock their horses, and they are so strongly against this practice that they will not allow any horse with a docked tail to enter any of their particular classes.

Evelyn put her arms round my neck and kissed me, and encouraged me all she could,

and told me to remember how my mother, Lady Beechwood, had won the championship at the Richmond Horse Show for going fast, and also of the great reputation of my father, George Hummer, for very fast racing.

I was much cheered by Evelyn's loving words; but the successes of both Eros and Chanticler whenever we had a race made me feel very doubtful about myself and my powers, and when master came to say good-night to me, I nestled against him and told him what I felt, and he quite understood and told me to do my best at the Show, and then, even if I won no prize at all, not to worry about it.

"You are just 'Elf' to me, and all the prizes in the world or no prize at all will not make the least difference in my feelings for you"; and I knew master meant what he said, but just because I am so dear to him, it makes me more anxious than ever to win him all the honours I can. When master left me, Minnie took my thoughts off myself by telling me about a row which she had had with the kitchen cat.

Tabby, in her way, was quite as good

a cat as Minnie, though of course she had not such a beautiful coat, and this made her rather jealous of my little friend. It turned out that cook had put Minnie's milk into Tabby's saucer by mistake, and when Minnie was enjoying her supper just before coming to me for the night, Tabby, thinking that she was stealing her milk, had gone up to her and slapped her face, and actually pulled a big mouthful of hair out of her beautiful ruffle; and Tabby could not have chosen a more effectual way to hurt and insult Minnie.

Furious with rage and indignation, Minnie told me that she struck out at Tabby, and a fierce quarrel had ensued. The saucer of milk was tipped over, and then Barney and Nero rushed out from their kennels to find out what all the noise was about.

"Barney and Nero didn't wait to ask about the dispute," said Minnie, "and they evidently thought I had stolen Tabby's milk, for they both looked very coldly at me, and then Barney, in that clever way of his, picked up Tabby's saucer in his mouth and marched off to cook.

"Tabby left me and followed Barney into the kitchen, and it was very hard for me to bear Tabby's look of triumph as cook put down before her a saucerful of beautiful milk. I tried to get near cook to show her I wanted supper, too, for of course I had lost mine; but Barney and Nero were displeased with me, and guarded the door until cook ordered them back to their kennels and shut me as well as them out of her cheery, warm kitchen.

"I felt very injured and badly treated," continued Minnie, "and I know I shall have a bad night, because I am so hungry."

I sincerely hoped that Minnie would not have a bad night, because that meant one for me, too, for she never thought of lying anywhere but on my back, however restless she felt.

We were both trying to get to sleep, and I had tried to comfort Minnie, when we heard voices outside, and presently Ricketts came into the stable, followed by the cook carrying Minnie's own bowl full of beautiful warm milk. She had found out her mistake just as she was going to bed, and thinking

that most likely Tabby had had both suppers, as both had been put into her saucer, she now brought milk for Minnie.

When cook came to my stable she never forgot me, and when she had put down the milk for Minnie she gave me a huge lump of sugar. I tried to eat it very quietly so that Eros and Chanticler might not know about this tit-bit, for cook didn't care for either of them as she cared for me, and didn't often bring them anything to eat. When Minnie had finished her milk she curled up again on my back, and in spite of quarrels and worries, we both had a very good night.

CHAPTER XI.

MY FIRST HORSE SHOW.

AT last the opening day of the great London Horse Show arrived, and master took me with Eros and Chanticler up to town to test our skill with other horses.

Although by this time I was four years old, I had never travelled by rail before, and at first I didn't like the sensation at all; but when I found that no hurt came to either me or my friends, I grew happier and thought only of all the wonderful doings I should witness at the Show. Eros and Chanticler, who had both been there before, were a little superior in their manner towards me, but I tried not to mind this. Mother had always told me that great minds let little annoyances pass, and as I wanted to be really great, I tried to remember this very good advice, and did not allow myself to grow irritable

and cross when they would air their knowledge before me without actually bringing me into the conversation.

When we arrived at the Show we were put into pretty boxes along with hundreds of other horses. Most of them were terribly frightened by the loud noise of the band, the brilliant lights, and the never-ceasing buzz of talk from the human visitors at the Show, as they pressed backwards and forwards.

Of course none of us minded these various noises in the very least. Noise had never hurt any of us before, and we were so accustomed to all kinds of racket that we were really more amused than frightened, and I thoroughly enjoyed the music, although Chanticler, who is always contrary, said it was poor.

I soon espied my friend Invicta, but could not see either the Dandy or Czarina. The horse standing next to me, and indeed nearly all the horses I saw, had, instead of a long flowing tail like mine, only a little bare stump, not as long as one of my ears and with but a few short hairs at the end. I thought I had never seen anything so thoroughly ugly, even the Dandy had more

left of his tail than nearly everyone of these horses around me. I asked my next-door neighbour if it had hurt him very much to have his tail defaced like that, and he confessed that it had hurt him most horribly and he shook all over with the remembrances my question had brought to his mind. Then he said in a voice of forced bravado :

"My tail is a fashionable length, while yours is very antiquated and out of date, I would advise you to persuade your master to let you have your tail shortened. Also, with a tail like yours, you cannot be entered in the driving classes, which is a very great drawback to you."

This made me feel rather angry, and I said, "You don't know my master if you think he could be persuaded to have any one of our tails mutilated for the sake of winning a prize. Why, only the other day, my master refused a first prize for Chanticler rather than have his tail docked."

Eros, Chanticler, and myself had all been entered in the trotting class for young horses, and when the time came for us to show what we could do, master did the only unkind thing he has ever done to me in my

life, for he drove Eros himself and told Ricketts to take me, while another man called Evans took Chanticler.

The big doors at the end of the arena were thrown open, and in a moment we were in the ring, perfectly calm and steady, waiting, with several other horses, for the signal to start off. The race seemed over in no time. Eros won the first prize, Chanticler the second, and I only the third.

During the excitement of the race I momentarily forgot my grievance, but directly it was over, all my soreness of heart came back, and I felt sure I should have done better if only master had driven me himself and had not left me to Ricketts.

When I was again in my box, and master came to me and patted my head, I looked at him very sadly and tried to let him know how much he had pained me, and he seemed to understand and looked sad too, and then I felt I wanted to be friends, and I put my nose into his neck and nestled against him. Master and I loved each other too dearly to be at variance for long, and after all we had taken all the prizes in that race and won great honour for the family, and so I cheered

up. Though even now I do think master ought to have driven me himself at my first show, don't you, little friends? ; although I must acknowledge that Eros is both swifter and prettier than I am.

After the race people came round to our boxes and petted and admired us, and my rather plaintive expression, intensified by the disappointment I had suffered, won for me so much sympathy and attention that by and bye I felt a kind of heroine and grew quite contented and happy again.

This Horse Show, as you know, little friends, lasts nearly a week, and we were much interested in all we saw and heard. One day a horse began kicking because his harness touched his legs when he was being driven, and he had to be turned out of the ring in disgrace. If only he had had a master like mine to train him he wouldn't have been frightened by such a little thing. You remember I told you that master often had the reins loosely tied round my legs when he played at horses with me, so if mine had happened to touch me in the ring, I should just have taken no notice, and neither would Eros nor Chanticler have done.

Amongst the visitors who came to look at us were the Dandy's friends, little Betty and her mother, and they both looked so pretty and smart. Betty was in a pale mauve coat with a little bonnet to match; while her mother wore a soft kind of dress of grey silky looking stuff. I also recognised many of the people who come to the park to see dear master. For a long time I could not see Lord and Lady Durand, and then strangely enough, they both stopped just in front of my box and began to talk to some friends.

I heard Lord Durand say that both the Dandy and Czarina had been entered for the tandem driving race; but that only the very day before the Show began Dandy had played up like anything while he and Czarina were having a last practice. The trainer, it appeared, had lost his temper and given the Dandy an extra hard lash from his whip, and this had made my poor nervous friend make a sudden bolt into the air, and then a mad wild dash to get away from his persecutor. He had smashed up the light little cart to which he was harnessed, and done serious damage both to

himself and Czarina, while the trainer was very badly bruised and shaken.

"You must have been cut up about the accident, Durand," I heard one man say ; while another chimed in, "I expect the flies worried the Dandy, too, for the weather has been so very hot, and you know, Durand, I have always warned you against those hat-peg tails all your horses have. They must suffer agony from the flies this weather, and the Dandy is just about as highly-strung as a horse can be."

This plain speaking evidently made Lord Durand very angry, for he answered sharply :

"It'll be the last chance the Dandy has to play up with me. I will let anyone who cares to buy him have him for a mere song."

When I heard all this, I felt dreadfully sorry for my poor friend, and I did hope that some one patient and kind would buy him.

Then Lord and Lady Durand and their friends moved on without even giving me a glance ; but I expect they were too perturbed to notice me. Just before we left the Horse

Show I heard a man, who was looking at me very hard, say to his friend :

"That horse's tail is too long and very dangerous ; if he happened to get it over his reins he would kick like anything and run away."

The friend replied, "Oh, that is one of Mr. Ingram's horses, and he has never been known to have a 'docked' horse in his stables. If he were not so dead against 'docking,' I believe his horses would take the greater number of prizes at most of the Horse Shows. He is considered, so I hear, one of the greatest authorities on horses and their training both in England and America, and I suppose in his influence over them and in his power to train he has no equal. He never uses a whip, but does nearly all his training by the voice, and he cultivates the same influence in all his trainers. He says it is marvellous how quickly horses learn the human language, especial'y when it is kind, gentle, and persuasive, and combined with infinite patience and tact."

Oh, how my heart went out to that man, who spoke so nicely of my dear master, and I gave a neigh to show my satisfaction and

to confirm all he had said ; but I am afraid I startled both him and the man who had criticised my tail, for they both gave a start, laughed, and then went away.

Presently they walked past my box again, and they were evidently still discussing master's wonderful training powers, for I heard the one who had already said a lot of kind things about master, say :

"I remember hearing that once a man in Mr. Ingram's employ, by mistake, harnessed two horses to a cart too short in the shafts for them. Directly Mr. Ingram began to drive them they knocked their hocks against the cart ; but except that they got a little frightened nothing happened. They stood perfectly still at the word 'Woa,' and quietly allowed themselves to be taken out of the cart and harnessed to the right one. Now, if an English 'docked' horse had gone through the same experience, he would most probably have kicked the front of his carriage all to pieces, for generally if a horse happens even once to knock his hocks against the axle he gets quite out of hand with fear, and often does much harm in his great alarm."

The two men moved on again, and I thought over the incident, which I well remembered happening, for I had heard Ricketts scold the offender well for his carelessness.

The great Show was over, and we returned to the park full of excitement and interest in all we had seen, done, and heard. I was very eager to recite all my experiences to the younger horses ; but Eros and Chanticler were quite blasé, and wouldn't tell much of all that had happened. The importance of having something to tell gave me great joy, and I had many eager listeners, and much sympathy for having taken only a third prize.

The first night after my return from London, Minnie made a great fuss over me, and so did Clasper and Nero, and they told me that they had all missed me very much, which was really very nice of them. During our absence, two new dogs had arrived at the park, a big collie called Laddie and a cheeky toy Pom, called Gollywog because of his thick, black coat ; but I shall have more to say about them later.

CHAPTER XII.

FOLLY AND HER MASTERS.

I AM now going to introduce you to my friend Folly. She is a beautiful mare and a very great contrast to myself, for while, as you will remember, my coat is a rich bay colour, Folly's is a handsome grey, so handsome indeed that master has not yet been able to meet with another horse, to his mind, equal to pair with her. She is very much admired by all visitors who come to the stables to see us, and being much older than I am, she is much wiser in worldly wisdom.

Folly was not born on the estate, and had lived in two other homes before master bought her and she so came to live with us. She had not been very happy in either of these homes, and when she first came to the park she was very subdued and quiet, and

her somewhat stately bearing, and the haughty manner in which she tossed her head, gave both my brother Eros and me the impression that Folly was undoubtedly proud. She was most unusually nervous too, and sometimes seemed quite afraid of Ricketts when he approached her, though no groom could have been gentler and kinder than he always was to us.

Folly would start and whinny timidly whenever Ricketts wanted to harness her to the light dogcart in which she was to take dear master somewhere or other.

After a time, Eros ventured to remonstrate with Folly for showing this fear of Ricketts, and he told her that she need never be afraid of our special attendant, or, indeed, of anyone at the park, for all the men employed by master in the stables had to be really fond of animals or he wouldn't have them to work for him.

Folly turned her head and gazed thoughtfully first at Eros and then at me, and there was a very sad expression in her lovely eyes as she answered :

"I am not really afraid of Ricketts, dear friends, and I will try to control my nervous

fears ; but this is the first home I have lived in where the approach of man has not meant rough treatment, and very often hard, stinging strokes from the lash of a whip."

I shuddered visibly ; the word whip recalled my own bitter experience, and I sympathised with Folly, and then both Eros and I begged her to try to forget the past, and to endeavour to make herself as happy as she could with us, and we again assured her that she need have no fear of anyone at the park.

"If I could only forget the past," sighed Folly ; "but Mr. Jackson was such a cruel master, and his men followed the bad example set them, and gave me and the other two horses, which were used to take the fruit to market, a very miserable time indeed."

Folly seemed inclined to talk, and so Eros and I prepared ourselves to listen, and she told us what I am now going to tell you, dear friends, about her early days.

Folly was born in the county of Somersetshire, and her first master was a Mr. Jackson, a prosperous and well-to-do market gardener. The Lord of the Manor in the

village where Mr. Jackson had built a large and very ugly villa, had got into money difficulties ; and Mr. Jackson, being rich, had paid him a very handsome price for Folly's mother when she was offered for sale. Sometime after, Folly herself was born, and, as you may imagine, she proved to be a very good horse indeed. Her small head was beautifully poised, and her legs were straight and slender, and at first Mr. Jackson was very proud of her, and she was the envy of all his friends.

Unfortunately, neither he nor the somewhat ignorant men he employed to work for him, knew much about horses, especially one of Folly's breed and calibre ; and the poor creature was not only put into harness much too soon, but she was broken in in the usual rough-and-ready way, and her sensitive nature was quite hurt, and her temper completely spoilt by harsh treatment.

Mr. Jackson and his men meant to master Folly, but they did not go the right way about it, and in the end Folly took things into her own hands and ran away. It happened that one day there was to be a local Flower Show in a village about

seven miles distant from where Mr. Jackson lived, and he had been asked to judge the flowers and fruit.

"This honour," said Folly, "gave the pompous old man great joy, and when the day came I was harnessed to the dog-cart as usual, and Mr. and Mrs. Jackson and stiff old Thomas, the groom, all crowded into the front seat. Mrs. Jackson, who was very gaily dressed in a brilliant plaid skirt, plush mantle, and a bonnet with the very straightest feather in it I have ever seen, wanted Thomas to take the back seat of the cart, saying it was more genteel, and the place where the servant ought to sit. Really I believe," said Folly, "Mr. Jackson thought so too; but as he always made a point of doing exactly the opposite of what his wife wished, he answered in a rude, gruff voice :

"'Tammass 'll no sit at back of cart, Anne; we 'ill all sit gether front, it 'll be warmer.'

"The day was broiling, and they all squeezed together in the front of the cart as Mr. Jackson had ordered. He drove, and his wife sat next to him, and the very straight feather in her bonnet kept tickling his face, making him very angry. He remonstrated

with her about it several times, but she only told him that their neighbour, Mrs. Jenkins, who had quite lately been staying in London with her sister, had told her that straight feathers were the very height of fashion. Here," said Folly, "I think Mrs. Jackson must have somehow have edged nearer to master and tormented him beyond endurance, for I heard a scream and then a white thing flew past my eyes and lay in the middle of the road, some yards ahead of me.

"I have always been very much afraid of strange things I see or meet on the road, and when I saw that white thing lying in front of me, I began to slacken pace and finally stood still. I simply dared not pass it, and in spite of cutting lashes from master's whip I remained immovable.

"‘Oh! Josiah,’ I heard Mrs. Jackson say, ‘we shall be late for the judging, not that I want to appear at the Show now with my beautiful bonnet, which Mrs. Jenkins did say was the height of fashion, all spoilt by your nasty temper.’

"‘Shut up about your bonnet, Anne, do!’ and master stood up in the cart, and beat me as hard as ever he could.

Time was getting on, but I felt that no power on earth would make me go past that strange white moving object. How did I know that it wouldn't suddenly pounce upon me, and do me some great harm."

"What did you do in the end?" Eros and I asked simultaneously.

"I kicked and reared for a bit and backed away from the fearsome object as far as ever I could, and then, nearly mad with the stinging pain from master's whip, I just whizzed suddenly round, flinging poor old Thomas into a ditch as I did so, and turned my back on the dreaded white thing, which had begun to move in a stealthy, evil way towards me; and ran and ran and ran. I heard Mrs. Jackson scream and master curse and swear, but I heeded them not, and I only came to a standstill when I was forcibly made to do so by a strong, firm grip on my bridle.

"Tired and exhausted I awaited my fate. The boy who had stopped me patted me kindly and talked soothingly to me; but master called me lots of cruel names, and said that he would teach me to run away. My young friend, whose name I afterwards learnt was Don, tried to quieten master

down, and told him that I was such a beautiful horse, that I was worth both patience and training. 'The brute 'ill get no more training from me,' he rudely answered, and with these words he drove on.

"I had fled in the direction of the ugly villa, so we very soon reached home. Master just threw down my reins and shouted to a stable-lad to go and fetch Thomas, and then walked into the house.

"'Josiah! Josiah!' called Mrs. Jackson, 'come and hold this awful beast's head while I get down.'

"But Josiah took no notice. Somehow or other Mrs. Jackson scrambled down, and taking her bonnet off before she moved away, I heard her say, 'How could Josiah do it, and it was the height of fashion, that feather was, for Mrs. Jenkins told me she had seen the likes on several smart hats in the Edgware Road, and just to think Josiah has ruined the whole thing in a moment of passion.'"

At this point Ricketts came to fetch Folly, and she promised both Eros and me that she would go on with her story when she came back. Nero, the large Newfoundland

dog, had followed Ricketts, and he was just saying a few pleasant words to us, when we were startled by a succession of loud angry barks, followed by a piteous cry of pain.

Off rushed Nero in the direction from whence the cries came, and after some moments had elapsed, we saw him coming slowly back, carrying in his mouth by the nape of its neck a poor little half dead terrier dog, which he gently dropped at the feet of Ricketts, and then licked it tenderly all over, wagging his tail the while and asking Ricketts to help. You may be sure that he did not ask in vain, for we saw Ricketts pick the poor little fellow up and carry him quickly in the direction of the kitchen and cook, and from henceforth the terrier, who was christened Dan, became one of us, and Nero and he were inseparable companions, and more than once I heard them spoken of as "Dignity and Impudence." Little Dan never forgot that big brave Nero had saved him from the rough boys, who were holding him and pelting him with stones for the mere pleasure of hearing him squeal.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BIRTH OF WHITE HEATHER.

FOLLY had not to take master very far that day, and directly she was unharnessed and had had a nice rub down, she went on with her story.

"When Mr. Jackson left me standing in the stable-yard the morning I tried to run away, he did not trouble to give any orders about me, and for some hours no one took the least notice of me, and I was left with my harness on and the cart behind me for quite a long time.

"I had got very hot with my speedy run, and soon I began to feel a sensation of chilliness all over my body, although the day was very warm. At last the lad who had been sent to find old Thomas returned, and after taking him to his home, which was

close to the villa, he turned his attention to me ; but he did not do much beyond taking me out of the cart. No one brought me anything to either eat or drink until quite late at night, and by that time all hunger had left me and I was aching in every limb, sore in body and mind. I got very little sleep, and when morning came I was very ill.

"Mr. Jackson was told how unwell I was, and because he was afraid I might die and that he would lose money by me, he let a doctor come to see me, but he never came near me himself, and so I got a rest from hard words and cruel blows and was very soon better again."

"Do you mean to say, Folly, that even when you were ill that your master never came to see you?" I asked. "Why, our dear master is always about if any of us are the least bit poorly."

"Yes, indeed," said Eros, "and we get such a lot of love and sympathy."

"I expect I shall be able to realise all this in time," answered Folly, "and I do wish I did not find it so very hard to forget the past."

Both Eros and I pleaded with her to try, because we did want her to feel happy and at home at the park, and we assured her again and again that she would have no cause to be miserable and afraid.

"But do go on telling us about yourself before you came here. Did you ever find out what the object was that frightened you so much, poor Folly?" I asked.

"Yes, I did; for I heard Thomas telling the men how silly I had been to run away from such a trifling thing as Mrs. Jackson's straight white feather which was the very height of fashion."

"But how did it get on to the road, Folly?"

"Thomas said that master was so angry because Mrs. Jackson would bob it into his face, that he pulled it out of her bonnet and threw it away, and that was the strange white thing which had flown so swiftly past me and settled in my pathway, terrifying me nearly out of my senses."

"Did Mr. Jackson ever drive you again?"

"No, I am thankful that he did not. As soon as ever I was better, I was sent to

Tattersall's and sold for a good round sum, to—whom do you think?"

"Neither of us are good at guessing, dear Folly," Eros and I both exclaimed.

"Well, even if you were I don't think you could guess who bought me, and so I will tell you. It was Don's father."

"Don's father! Do you mean the father of the boy who stopped you when you were running away with Mr. Jackson?"

"The very same."

"How strange; but surely you were happy with Don?"

"With the young master, yes, bless him; he was one of the kindest and most tender-hearted of people; but I never seemed able to please his father, who was a very passionate old gentleman. Nervous, too, and exceedingly irritable; he couldn't understand my highly-strung, sensitive nature, and he made me so frightened with his loud angry voice, that I was never at my best with him.

"When Don took me out, I always went well, and even ventured past fearsome-looking objects. He was never impatient with me, and often coaxed me on by his

kind, gentle voice, telling me not to be afraid, and promising not to let anything hurt me.

"By and bye I found the imaginary evils didn't hurt me, and I got quite brave when out with Don; but the old General, his father, never realised that I had grown better and wiser under his dear son's training, and whenever he took me out he shouted at me so crossly and loudly that all my new courage fled, and I was so frightened that I couldn't go nicely and bravely past all sorts of objects."

"Surely you didn't bother about the cross old father, when you were so happy with Don, Folly?"

"Yes, I did; for Don loved that cross old man with all his heart, and when one day I returned to the stable alone, having thrown the old gentleman off my back, Don cried, cried as though his heart would break, and all because I had sent his father flying into a ditch because he spurred me so cruelly."

"Couldn't Don see you had been badly treated and understand?"

"If he did he never said so, and soon

afterwards he went away to college, and I never saw him again before Mr. Ingram bought me. Of course I am really glad to be here, and I think I shall soon grow quite happy. I am happy now, when I can forget about Don's grief; but I did so hate being sent away when he was from home, because I may never see him again, and I did want him to know how I loved him."

I comforted Folly very much by telling her that perhaps after all she might see Don again, because master has such lots of friends who come to see him.

Time passed, and I really think Folly grew happy, and she lost her haughty ways with us, which made us like her better than we did at first, and it was a great joy to everyone at the park when she became the mother of a beautiful foal, which promised to be even a finer horse than Folly is herself, which is saying a great deal. The new foal had a big white patch on her forehead, and she was christened "White Heather," and Ricketts said that she had a lucky name, and if her successes in after life, at the numerous shows she



FOLLY AND WHITE HEATHER

visited, were a confirmation of this, "Well! White Heather does mean luck, that's all I can say"; and her little mistress Betty came to say so, too.

We all took the deepest interest in the beautiful new foal, and Folly grew keen about her training, and was very particular about her child's manners and general behaviour. The memory of past unhappinesses grew dimmer, and yet more dim, and Folly ceased to look upon anyone at the park as an enemy. White Heather was as playful as a kitten, and quite the favourite foal of the year, and this also helped to soften the poor mother's heart, and to fill it with kinder, gentler feelings towards mankind.

White Heather was to be used entirely for riding, and Ricketts undertook her training, and I heard master say that he wanted White Heather to turn into a very reliable horse indeed, because he wished to give her to a young friend of his.

White Heather looked on the funny side of life, and although she was always very good and obedient, she often amused us very much by the queer stories she told.

When she described her first sight of a motor-car, she said she could not think what the dreadful thing was which came racing towards her, and she would have walked right up to it and given it a kick to see what it was made of, if Ricketts hadn't pulled her quickly to the side.

"Weren't you afraid of it?" sceptically asked Chanticler.

"Afraid, what's that?" asked White Heather; and curiously enough she really didn't seem to know what fear meant, for nothing daunted her or kept her back. She had inherited none of her mother's nervous fears, for which Folly felt very thankful.

When White Heather was taken to a level crossing to see a train pass, she just started back a little when she saw the smoke from the engine, and then pricked her ears as if expectant of great things, and stood perfectly still, so still that Ricketts said he had never seen her like, and we, remembering our own fears in the early days of our training, one and all admired White Heather's great pluck immensely.

When she was old enough, a saddle was put on her back, and Ricketts put a queer

black apron thing on himself, and sat sometimes on the side of White Heather's back and sometimes astride.

I asked mother why Ricketts wore the funny thing round his legs, and she told me that evidently a lady was to ride White Heather, and that Ricketts wore the apron so that White Heather might not be frightened when she felt the lady's skirt against her. I did not say so to mother, because I thought she might think me rude, but I said to myself, "It would take more than a riding skirt to frighten White Heather."

My mother proved to be right about White Heather being intended for a lady to ride, for one day a little girl called Betty came to the park, and she was accompanied by the beautiful lady, whom she called mother or mummie. Master took them all over the stables, and before they went away he presented Betty with White Heather, and told her that she was to be her very own.

Eros and I shall never forget the look of joy and glad surprise which lightened up the little girl's face, or the sound of her sweet soft voice as she thanked our dear master for his beautiful gift.

Betty was all eagerness to try White Heather, and so impatient that she would not wait for a saddle. Catching hold of the reins Ricketts had hastily slipped on, the child mounted the horse with a spring, and she made a lovely picture as she flew fearlessly round and round the paddock sitting astride White Heather, her fair hair flying in the wind, her pretty girlish face radiantly happy and aglow with the exercise she was so thoroughly enjoying.

White Heather was certainly to be envied her little mistress, and later on, when we heard that Betty was the same little girl who had pleaded so earnestly with Lady Durand, that the Dandy and Czarina might not have their tails hurt, we felt a double interest in her, and loved to think that from henceforth she was our dear White Heather's mistress, and we were able to comfort poor Folly, who at first sadly missed her child, by telling her what a kind humane home she had gone to, and what a loving little mistress we felt sure she would have in Betty, and a most kind friend in the lady Betty called "mother."



Esme Collings.

THE LADY BETTY CALLED MOTHER.

CHAPTER XIV.

POOR GRACE.

I HAVE not mentioned Grace before, because until I heard the little story I am now about to relate to you, I really had not thought much about her after she left the park, though I was very fond of her when she lived with us.

Grace was the same age as Eros and Chanticler, and so a year older than I am, and I often listened to my friend and brother discussing her happy, mischievous ways, and the wild pranks she played on her poor anxious mother. When we heard that Grace was to go to a far-away country called Hungary, and that she would have to travel in a train, and go on a boat, she became an object of great interest, even to me ; but her importance made her rather scornful about my advances, and once she called me a

"silly baby" when I was trying to describe a train journey to her, as mother had described it to me.

She was quite different to Eros and Chanticler, and listened respectfully to all they had to say, for they were the same age as she was herself, not a year younger as I am, and therefore considered a mere ignoramus. A year's difference in age is of much account in horseland.

Great preparations were made for Grace's safety and comfortable transit, and she grew very excited about her journey as the day for her departure drew near. When the time came for her to say good-bye to us, she did so very bravely, and went off into that unknown world a happy, loving, trusting creature. Her faith and confidence in man admitted no doubt in her gay, careless nature but that she would receive every kindness as she had always done from the days of babyhood. Hitherto Grace had never experienced anything to impair her implicit faith in man; and as she pluckily started off on her journey into that far-away country, it never entered her simple trusting mind that she might have to encounter hard-

ships and difficulties and pain of which she as yet knew nothing.

In good time master heard of Grace's safe arrival, and of the entire satisfaction she had given to her new owner, and of the growing friendship between the two. My dear master was delighted with the good news, and it was with joyful anticipation, when some time later he was travelling in Austria, that he called to see Grace in her foreign home.

I can well imagine his disappointment when, instead of the beautiful lively little mare who had left the park, a quiet, subdued Grace was pointed out to him, a Grace with her handsome tail gone, and only a kind of hat-peg left in its place.

Master exclaimed in surprise at the difference in her appearance, and Mr. Montague, the man who had bought her, gave the following account to our dear master of what had happened, and thus explained the reason of the great change which had come over our former happy, bright companion. I heard master tell Ricketts all about it, and so I can tell you, my little friends.

Mr. Montague told master that he had bought Grace to pair with a horse he already had, called Black Bruce, and until he saw the horses together he had never given the subject of tails a thought. Black Bruce had come to him with a docked tail, and he only noticed this when he saw Grace with her handsome flowing tail harnessed beside him. The groom drew his master's attention to the fact that as it was impossible to lengthen Black Bruce's tail, Grace's must be shortened.

Mr. Montague was a dreamy, sensitive man, and not realising in the least what this would mean to poor Grace, whom he already loved very dearly, he only said to the groom :

"I suppose you must shorten Grace's tail to make her look right with Black Bruce, but I do wish we could put a bit on to his instead."

The groom took this for permission to have Grace's tail docked, and the operation was performed as quickly and mercifully as possible, but from that time Grace would allow no man to approach her. She would not even take corn or food from his hand, and it was only when everyone was quite out of sight that she would feed herself.

Man had degraded and tortured her, and from henceforth he was her enemy, a power to be dreaded and escaped from.

Grace was four years old when her tail was shortened to make her pair with Black Bruce, and so she suffered very terribly, for every year the bones of a tail become much more fixed and set, and are therefore much more painful to break.

When the operation was over, Mr. Montague went to see Grace, and he told master, with tears in his eyes, how his favourite received him. The once merry, trusting Grace was quite changed.

As her master approached her she gave no sign of joy or pleasure, as she had always done before. The ears which had hitherto been pricked with eagerness and joy at the sound of his footsteps lay back in lank depression, and the soft, beautiful eyes, with all their lustre gone, gazed at him sadly and reproachfully, through the blurred veil which pain had brought there, and then Grace—brave, fearless Grace—shrank away from the master she had grown to love so dearly, and couched in fear when he would have touched her.

She had trusted and loved man, and in return he had taken away almost all the tail—which God in His far-seeing thoughtful love had given to her for her use and comfort—for a mere caprice, a paltry excuse, so that she might look right to pair with another maimed creature. Man, whom she had always trusted, loved and obeyed, had by his own deed wrecked her faith in him, and made himself her enemy.

Fear, and hate, and rebellion crept into Grace's mind, and took the place of that silent adoration, that boundless confidence in man, at once so strong, so wonderful and so pathetic in the horse mind. Great men, and thoughtful, feel humble when they realise the capacity of love and faithfulness to be found in the animal world, of which the horse stands out the chief for his true nobility of character, and as the most patient and enduring friend of man.

Mr. Montague told master that he had never ceased to regret that he had given the groom's suggestions about Grace's tail so little thought, and he did everything in his power to regain Grace's love and trust. At first all his efforts were in vain. Grace would

not allow either her master or any other man to touch her, much less put her into harness, and so Mr. Montague ordered her to be turned out to grass for a year, and hoped that in time the once bright little mare would grow friendly and happy again, and forget for all time how man had tormented her; but alas! the flies never let a horse forget the fact when she has no tail left with which to defend herself from their cruel persecution. A horse's memory, too, is very strong. To be docked when quite a foal is bad enough, because of the never-ceasing after misery; but to be docked at four years old, as Grace was, is a thousand times worse, and for the operation to be performed on old horses, and repeated twice and even three times, must place the perpetrators of such deeds quite without the pale, in the mind of every man worthy of the name, for surely the soul of man departs from him, when he uses his divine superiority only to torture one of his best friends. Try as he will, and argue with all the power at his command, Man cannot get away from the fact which I will repeat again to you, that a horse once deprived of his tail is from henceforth at the

mercy of all flies, which are as cruel and real to him as the lion would be to man, if he lived in a country where the king of beasts roamed about seeking whom he might devour.

In fact, man's life, under the contrasting circumstances, would be preferable, because the lion's onslaught would be once and for all to him, while the flies only torture the horse—they never kill it.

Eros and Chanticleer and I were all very much impressed by what we had heard about Grace, especially at the time when all our minds were full of the desire to interest the children of the human world on the subject of "docking," and to secure their real and valuable help in our great cause by adding their plea to ours for the protection of every horse's tail.

CHAPTER XV.

INVICTA CONTINUES HER TALK WITH THE ELF.

THE next time Invicta brought her master to the park I was alone, and she and I had a cosy time together. We very soon began to discuss the subject uppermost in both our minds, and I begged Invicta to go on telling me about the excuses which ignorant people give when they are taxed with the question—

“Why do you dock your horse?”

“All right, Elf,” answered my friend, glad to be called upon to give information on a subject she so well understood. “Let me think, Elf,” she said, “How many of these silly, feeble excuses have I already explained away?”

“Three, Invicta,” I answered, recounting

them—for fashion, for cleanliness, and for strengthening purposes.

“Yes,” answered Invicta, “so I have, and there are still three others equally poor to dismiss. They are—for safety, for selling purposes, and because of custom.

“First we will take ‘for safety.’ Many people honestly believe that a long tail is a source of great danger to a horse in harness, and think if he once gets his tail over the reins he becomes frightened and then kicks and rears and tries to run away. A horse does sometimes do this; but it is generally the docked horse which gets the most frightened, for the rein touching his tail recalls painful memories, and also he has no power in his poor little stump to switch all that remains to him of a tail under the reins again. His vain efforts to do this, and the fierce attacks of flies, drive him to despair, and so he runs away, away from the suffering, which the rein touching his poor maimed tail, brings back to his memory.

“Now, I,” said Invicta, “often get my tail over my reins; but it doesn’t bother me in the least, I just switch it back when I feel inclined to”; and I agreed with my friend,

and told her that I did the same ; but that only the other day master and I had been delayed for quite a long time when we were out driving, by a big crowd which had gathered round a poor frightened horse, who was madly kicking the front of his carriage all to pieces, and holding the reins tight with such a poor little bit of a tail.

"I edged as near as I could to him, and said :

" 'Why do you kick about like that, I don't get frightened when my tail is over the reins, see '—and I at once switched my tail over my reins.

"Just for a moment the poor frightened creature paused, and as I moved away I heard him say :

" 'It's all very well for you to talk, you don't know how it hurts when humans take hold of your tail and chop a piece of it off, and then burn it with a cruel hot iron.' "

"He was quite right, Elf," answered Invicta. "You and I don't know from experience ; but, nevertheless, it behoves us, I think, even more than if we too had suffered, to do all we can to get this terrible practice abolished, for many and often very

serious accidents are caused by touching the tail of a docked horse. The frightened, defenceless creatures are afraid of what may be going to happen, and often make a frantic rush into danger to get away from the mad fear of pain, the unnecessary pain they have felt, and dread to feel again.

"As I have said before, many people honestly believe in this danger of the tail over the reins, but they may rest assured that there is infinitely greater danger of harm coming when this happens with the docked horse than with the horse who has never had his tail maimed or hurt in any way, and so has nothing to fear.

"Besides, when the tail is docked, as our friend the Dandy has so repeatedly told us, it becomes partially paralysed, and it is much more difficult to switch it back again if it does happen to get over the reins. It is this vain and exasperating effort and the ill-timed attack of the flies which drive poor horses to distraction, and make them irresponsible for their acts.

"Then again, Elf, as both your master and mine would say, if a horse's tail were a source of danger to him in harness,

the cart ought to be made to fit the horse, not the horse to fit the cart. Surely all nations must agree with this when they think of the beautiful, living, sensitive horse, second only to man in intelligence and usefulness, so brave, yet so easily subdued, and so generous and uncomplaining in his service to mankind. Do ask them, Elf, to show their intelligence and approval by ceasing from henceforth to allow horses to be mutilated to fit the inanimate objects made of wood and iron, which they so patiently drag behind them.

"Instead of cutting off, in many cases nearly the whole of a live animal's tail, surely it would be better to make some arrangement to make it impossible for the tail to get over the reins, and this could quite easily be done by extending the support for the reins to rest upon, ten or twelve inches above the horse's back.

"Of course, people who want to persist in the cruel practice of docking, would say that the driver would not so easily feel the horse's mouth if the reins were so raised; but if this is to be the means of making a horse know what you want him to do, well,

all I can say is that he will soon have no mouth left able to feel.

"A good driver never jags and tugs at the reins; he gives the horse the benefit of the intelligence God has given him, and tells him what he wants, and only very slightly presses the reins, never pulls them."

"I once had my mouth pulled, Invicta," here I said, "and I have never forgotten how it hurt me. Master always tells me when I am to stop by saying 'Woa,' and when he takes my reins in his hands and says, 'Now, Elf,' or 'Ready,' I know I am to start off, a very slight pressure of the reins directs me to right or left, and the words, 'Steady, Elf,' alters my pace."

"I know all that, Elf, for my master drives me in the same way. You must not talk so much, or I shall never get through all I want to tell you so that you can tell the human children."

"I am sorry, Invicta," I said, and she went on.

"I wonder how many humans would allow their feet to be cut to fit their boots, and I think it is a dreadful disgrace that in this glorious, wonderful, and free England,

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nine horses out of every ten are mauled and disfigured for this safety whim, amongst others ; while a comparatively new State like California, where both riding and driving is much rougher and harder, has for the last five years made the docking of horses an unlawful practice, and labelled as illegal for import any animal thus mutilated.

"Now I will go on, Elf, to tell you about the fifth reason given as an excuse for docking, which is, that docked horses are more 'saleable.'"

"If this reason is valid all I can say is, that it is a disgrace to all true lovers of horses, and it would be well," said Invicta, "if the royal example of King George V. were more generally followed, for he allows no docked horse in either stables or troops. In most parts of the United States a good tail considerably increases the value of a horse, and so it ought to be all over the world.

"Some English people say that a hackney, which is the horse most generally in use, would look silly with a long tail. Now I would just like them to know what we horses think about the humans who can

entertain such a foolish idea, which is that though they may not *look* silly, nevertheless they *are*, and very cruel too.

"All modern horsemen know that docking is never necessary. Those who object to the flowing tail can always plait it, and turn it up, or make the 'bang' tail which I think you said you had explained to the children, Elf."

"Yes, I have, Invicta."

"Owners of horses need have no fear that a horse thus treated will lose any of its value, because it won't, but rather the contrary. If all horse societies and agricultural shows would follow the splendid example of the 'Hunters' Improvement Society of Great Britain, docked horses would become extinct in a very few years. As long, however, as they are allowed to take part in horse shows, so long will ignorant and cruel people go on docking their horses.

"Only when the personal touch comes in, and humans cannot do as they wish by the laws of the horse societies, will the evil practice of docking be finally abolished. So please all 'heads' of such societies listen

to the united appeal of myself and the Elf, and forbid docked horses to enter your show rings.

"A few years ago it was considered that a hunter looked best docked, but now a docked hunter is forbidden entry to shows, and so scarcely one is to be seen; and if only the Hackney Horse Show chiefs would forbid docked hackneys in show rings, they would indeed do a tremendous and most humane service in horseland, and it would be a twice blessed act of mercy; for if English breeders would only cease to maim and mutilate their horses, my master thinks that there would be a very great demand for English bred hackneys both in Canada and the United States.

"As it is, the greater number of horsemen in America will not look at what they call the bobtail horse; and, of course, this term applies to both Shires and Clydesdales, as well as Hackneys."

"Well, Invicta," here I said, "if all you tell me is true, I cannot see any foundation for the statement that docked horses are more saleable than the undocked horses."

"Of course you cannot, Elf," she answered

rather impatiently, "any more than the true and sincere horse-loving human. But I must hurry on, for my master will want me to take him home very soon now, and I do want just to explain away the sixth reason which people give as an excuse for docking.

"All the aforesaid reasons having failed to satisfy the horse-lover, interrogating a man who docks his horses, the 'docker,' as a last resource, takes refuge in the poor, cowardly and lame excuse, 'It is the custom.'

"Custom certainly has a lot to answer for in this work-a-day world, master says; but that it should be an excuse for cruelty is a crying shame in these civilised days. Even amongst the ancient Britons there is evidence that mutilation of any animal was illegal, and the Greeks and Romans loved their horses as they loved their children, and took the greatest pride in the beauty of their appearance. Master thinks it is too sad for words that the English people of to-day should be less kind than their woad-painted forebears.

" 'Docking' may be and is the custom of to-day, but Englishmen ought, and surely must, realise, if they give the fact a thought,

that such a falling away from the humane height of the ancient Britons, who inhabited this little island of theirs so many years ago, is a truth scarcely to their credit."

At this point, Invicta said that she could hear Ricketts coming towards the stable, and this proving to be so, she said a hurried "good-bye" and went off with the groom to take her master home.

I hope, dear friends, that you will be as interested as I was and am in all that Invicta told me, and to impress these truths I will write them down for you in rotation, with a word or two at the side of each to remind you of what I and all in horseland think of the petty excuses given by dockers of horses to excuse their deeds of evil. In the order in which Invicta has explained them away, they come, you remember :

One	..	Fashion	..	..	Despicable.
Two		Strengthening			
		purposes			Absolute nonsense.
Three	..	Cleanliness	..	..	Mere laziness.
Four	..	Safety	..	..	A mistaken idea.
Five	..	More saleable	..	..	Rather the reverse.
Six	..	Custom	..	..	A cowardly refuge.

Surely these facts must help to better the future treatment of horses—the animal which is wanted at every turn, for pleasure and drudgery, for show and sport, in peace time and in war time, the ever-willing friend and necessity of man. So, please “Man,” do as I ask you, and let “docking” be from henceforth a practice of the past.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DANDY AND THE ELF MEET AT A BAZAAR.

FOR some time after my first Horse Show I heard nothing at all of the Dandy. After some months I began to hear scraps of news concerning him from the men about the place, and Eros and I felt sure from what we heard that his circumstances were now very, very different from what they had been, and we both felt very sorry for him; but Chanticler was horrid, and said that the Dandy did not deserve to be happy, when he had so wilfully got himself banished from Durand Tower, on account of his wicked temper.

Eros and I stuck up for the Dandy, and argued that it was not temper, but real suffering, which had caused the poor fellow to break away from his trainer only the day before the Show, at which Lord Durand had

set his heart on the Dandy and Czarina doing so well.

It was shortly after this discussion with Chanticler that master took me to an open-air bazaar to show off my beauty and my powers. By this time I was very well-known, at any rate by name, to all the surrounding country-folk, and the fact that I was to perform at the bazaar was sure to attract a certain number of people.

It had been got up in aid of the "The Band of Mercy" movement, and as you may imagine, master was only too glad, and so was I, to further its cause to the best of our ability. I was dressed in all the splendour of my silver-studded Russian harness, which master always allows me to wear on grand occasions. I am wearing the same harness in my picture; but of course you cannot see in it how really smart I look when I have it on, because the photographer was not clever enough to bring out the sparkle of my fine silver studs.

I got through my performance with great credit, and master was very pleased with me, and the guests cheered me ever so loudly, and even wanted me to trot round

the ring a second time, for they said I went like lightning ; but master bowed and shook his head, for he would not let me get too tired.

The pleasure I had so evidently given filled me with excitement, and as master was staying a little longer at the bazaar, he took me to a nice shady spot, and left me to calm down and await his departure.

I was bubbling over with happiness and pride, and in imagination I listened again and again to the hearty claps of the people, and I thought about the admiration I had gained for myself as I trotted swiftly or stood perfectly still, at a word from master, with my long tail either under or over the reins, at my pleasure.

There was no Eros or Chanticler present to eclipse me in either speed or beauty, and as I stood patiently waiting for dear master, I felt very pleased with myself and the world in general.

There were several horses harnessed to beautiful carriages, and also numerous cabs, in varying degrees of shabbiness, standing near me, and it was fastened to one of the very shabbiest of the latter that after much

hard staring I recognised, as if by mesmeric power, my old friend the Dandy. The poor creature was strangely altered, and had it not been for his peculiar and characteristic jerk of the head, I don't think I could possibly have known who it was standing so near to me.

The Dandy's once beautiful sleek black coat was now rough and dull-looking, his eyes were blurred and heavy, and his whole bearing was that of a weary and dejected creature having no joy in either life or in the living. Instead of his never-ceasing restlessness of bygone days, he now stood quite, quite still, evidently too spiritless and down-hearted to do anything but what he was forced to do.

"Dandy," I called softly; but he took no notice, "Dandy, don't you know me? I am so glad to meet you again."

Slowly, very slowly, my old friend turned his eyes on me, and the despairing hopelessness of his expression I shall never forget. His voice sounded weak and hollow as he answered:

"Thank you, dear Elf, you have always been a kind, sympathetic friend. You are

clever indeed to recognise this shadow of my former self, for I feel, when I am able to feel at all, that I am a kind of changeling, and I am very much surprised, when any of my old friends know me; sometimes indeed I feel I scarcely know myself. Since I left Durand Towers I have been from time to time so beaten, starved, and altogether badly treated, that all my spirit and self-respect have gone, and now I really don't seem to care what becomes of me. My mind is often quite a blank, and I forget things, and a numb kind of feeling comes over me when I try to remember. Nearly all the other horses on the cab-stand hate me for they think I am quiet and distant, because I am too proud to be friendly and chatty with them. Yours, dear Elf, is the first kind voice I have heard for many a long day."

"Poor Dandy," I murmured, "would it comfort you to tell your troubles to me?"

"Perhaps it would, Elf; anyhow I should like to tell you something of all I have gone through since I paired with Czarina, and was the pride of my Lady Durand: for then you will better understand why I am now so very different from the old Dandy you used

to know. I suppose you heard of what occurred on that dreadfully hot day just before that Horse Show at which Czarina and I were to be driven tandem for the first time?"

"Yes, I did, Dandy, for I heard people talking about your naughtiness at the Show. If you remember, it was my first Show, and I was very disappointed when I knew that you and Czarina would not be there, for of course both Eros and I had fully expected to see you."

"Did you say people were calling me naughty, Elf?"

"Yes, Dandy, they were."

"Naughty, indeed. I just wonder how any horse could have acted differently, for the trainer took us out when the sun was at its very hottest, and there was a perfect plague of flies about. I was feeling nervous and excited about the Show, and I suppose this and the extreme heat and the perpetual attacks of the flies made me even more difficult to manage than usual, for it is a certain fact that the man who was driving us beat me most unmercifully. I bore the cruel cuts from his whip as long as I could,

and then made one desperate effort to get away.

"I reared on to my hind legs, showed the whites of my eyes, and then suddenly bolted, dragging poor Czarina and the cart behind me. I soon managed to pitch the trainer over a hedge; but still I tore madly on, and only came to a standstill when a plucky policeman, hanging on to my reins, stopped me. I was alone then, for the reins which held Czarina and me, one in front of the other, had evidently snapped in two.

"As the policeman led me home, I trembled in every limb. We soon came across Czarina standing patiently by the smashed-up cart, but nowhere could I see the cowardly man who had beaten me so cruelly.

"The brave policeman took hold of Czarina's broken rein and, placing himself between us, took us back to Durand Towers, and as our somewhat sorry party moved slowly along, he talked to both of us very kindly and soothingly."

"Whatever did Lord Durand say to you when you got home again?"

"Well, Elf, of course he was very angry ;

but, if you remember, he never quite approved of his wife's craze for fashion in having my tail docked, and I heard him mutter—half in pity for me, but in fear of being disloyal to Lady Durand—that he expected the flies were greatly to blame for my running away as I had no tail left with which to dash them off my poor exposed legs. I think my mistress was really more angry than her husband, and it was she who advised him to sell me at once for anything he could get for me, and then to my horror, I heard my former master say to the head groom that he could try to find a purchaser for me.

"Fancy, Elf, being disposed of in that undignified way, just left to a groom to get what he could for me, and not even going to Tattersall's to be properly bid for, like all the other horses who had been sold from the Towers."

"Had you damaged yourself, Dandy?" I asked.

"Alas! Elf, yes. I had seriously hurt both knees of my forelegs, and although they very soon got well again, I shall always have these ugly scars which you can see on

each, and so I suppose Lord Durand thought I wasn't worth bothering about, as my value was so greatly lessened.

"The groom soon heard of a man who was glad to buy me 'cheap,' and about three weeks after my bolt I left the Towers early one morning and was taken to a little country railway station about a mile away. I heard the screech of the engine and saw a train come tearing in to which was fastened a horse-box.

"The train stopped, and some men came towards me to help the lad who had brought me to the station to get me into the horse-box. I felt very miserable and frightened, and in my terror I kicked and reared so wildly that a sack had to be put over my head before they could persuade me to enter the carriage, which had evidently been annexed to the train for me and me alone. Then I had a long, long journey by rail, and only reached my destination quite late in the evening.

"I must confess that the man who came to the station to meet me was very kind, and my first impression of my new surroundings were not unfavourable. The

farmer, who had bought me as a birthday present for his wife, was rather proud of my appearance; he didn't mind the damaged knees as he had got me 'cheap.'

"I was given a fairly comfortable stall in a small stable, very different from my palatial loose-box at Durand Towers; but still, not bad. Then the man who had fetched me from the station gave me a rub down and a good supper; and considering my changed circumstances, I passed a fairly good night.

"The next morning I was harnessed to a gaily-painted gig, which was supposed to be smart, but which I thought vulgar, and driven round to the front door of the farmhouse. Presently the farmer and his wife came out, and with much pomp and ceremony 'I' and the 'gig' were presented to the lady.

" 'My, Fletcher,' she said, 'you have done me well this time.'

" 'I can afford it, Maria; the whole thing there cost me a pretty penny.'

"I snorted, for I knew he had bought me for a mere song.

"Mrs. Gibson, the name of my new

mistress, insisted on going for a drive at once, and although her husband said that the man must go with her, in case I played up, she drove me herself. She was a shocking driver, and pulled and jagged my mouth very badly; she met lots of friends on the road we took, and we made many stops for me to be admired."

"That surely was nice for you, Dandy?" I interrupted.

"Don't be too hasty in drawing conclusions, Elf; but hear what I have to say.

"We drove for nearly three hours, and we were almost home again, when we met a lady coming towards us in a dog-cart, and she was also driving herself. She pulled up and Mrs. Gibson stopped also. They exchanged a few pleasantries, and then the lady said to my mistress:

"'I see you have got a new horse, Mrs. Gibson.'"

"'Yes, Miss Franks. Fletcher gave him to me only this morning for a birthday present; what do you think of him?'

"'He looks a fine fellow; but don't you think his tail is just a bit too long for the present-day fashion?'

"The words made me tremble all over, Elf."

"I should think so, you poor, poor Dandy."

"I listened eagerly for Mrs. Gibson's reply, which was rather reassuring, for she said,

" 'I think you must be mistaken, Miss Franks, for Fletcher told me that Dandy came from a very swell place, some Towers or other, where they keep heaps of horses; real gentry, Fletcher said, the people are from whom he bought my present.' "

"Miss Franks would not be convinced about the length of my tail, and at last grew angry with Mrs. Gibson, so, bidding her good morning, she drove on, and we went home.

"Mr. Gibson came out to meet his wife, and at once asked her if she was satisfied with me.

" 'The Dandy's all right,' she answered; 'but Miss Franks says his tail is not a fashionable length. It ought to be only a stump.' "

" 'His tail's short enough, in all conscience,' answered Mr. Gibson.

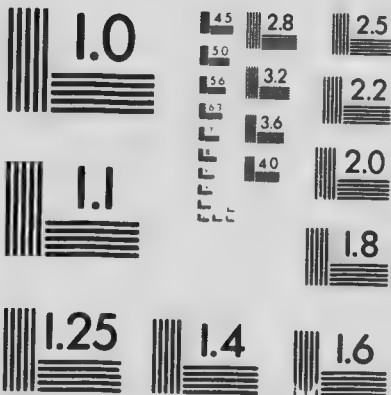
" 'Miss Franks says it isn't, and I shall have a bit more of it taken off.'

" 'Don't, Maria,' said her husband, 'it's a cruel deed to the poor beasts'; but her only reply was, 'I'm not going to have that Miss Franks crowing over me about fashion,' and from that moment I lived in daily dread of what would happen to me."



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CHAPTER XVII.

THE DANDY'S DOWNFALL AND THE PASSING OF THE LONDON CAB HORSE.

I LOOKED at the Dandy's tail, and for the first time since our meeting I noticed that he really had had his tail docked again, and that now, without any exaggeration, he had nothing but the veriest stump left.

"Poor, poor, Dandy," I said, "I am afraid you have been tortured again."

"Yes, Elf, tortured and mutilated," he answered; and the toneless misery in his voice was heart-breaking as he went on to say:

"Mrs. Gibson did not keep me in suspense for long, and scarcely a week after my arrival at the farm, two rough stable-lads, after securely roping my legs so that I couldn't kick out and defend myself, maimed my tail a second time.

"One held my head, while the other took hold of my poor bit of a stump, and with a dirty-looking knife chopped another inch or so of the bone away. I went mad with pain and fright, and somehow or other I managed to break the ropes which fastened my legs together, and then I ran and ran I knew not where, leaving print-marks of blood in my agony as a guiding line for my torturers to find me.

"Someone must have caught me and brought me back to the farm, for when I realised things again, I realised I was there. Then followed a succession of attempts to harness me; but all in vain. By this time man was my greatest enemy, a power to be dreaded and feared.

"One day a grand new gig arrived, and with the aid of several men I was at last harnessed to it, and two of the helpers were ordered to take me out on trial. I saw they funk'd it, and I was not surprised, for I know I looked wicked.

"For a short time I went fairly steadily, but I meant to punish man as he had punished me. I know it wasn't noble or generous to feel like that; but really all

good kind thoughts had passed out of my mind for the time being, and a burning desire for revenge had entered into me.

"Well, I broke that gig to pieces, and I seriously injured both men. My poor stump, which was still very sore, hurt me terribly, and I was filled with a sickening fear, lest by any chance it should get hurt again.

"After throwing out the men, and effectively breaking up the gaily-painted gig, the very brightness of which seemed to taunt me, I managed to free myself from my traces, and finding some grass land near, I began to graze, not bothering or caring what happened to me next. I was beyond that now.

"It grew dark, and I began to wonder if I was going to be left to die in peace, for I felt very ill and very tired. Then I saw five or six men coming towards me carrying lanterns in their hands.

"I looked for a way of escape; but the lane where I stood was narrow, and there was a closed gate at the end. The small army of men surrounded me, a noose was thrown over my head, and I was firmly

secured, and led back once again to the farm.

"My master met us at the gate, and when he had heard all about the mischief which I had done, he swore a terrible oath, and grasping my rope from the man who was leading me, said in a savage voice :

" 'I'll teach you, Mr. Dandy, to play up like this,' and then he beat, and beat, and beat me until I could have screamed with the pain, the last extremity of the horse.

"Of course I struggled to get away; but again man was stronger than I, and again I had to submit to man's brutality. Warned by the men looking on that he was going a bit too far, and exhausted by his efforts to inflict a sufficient punishment for my naughtiness, Mr. Gibson at last stayed his hand, leaving me more dead than alive."

"Poor Dandy, I do wish one of those officers whom the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals send out had seen that angry farmer beating you so cruelly."

"If there had been anyone like that about, dear Elf, to see my condition when

Mr. Gibson left off thrashing me, and had reported him, I have no doubt that he would have found himself heavily fined, or put into prison, for that humane society is very down on wanton cruelty, and mine was a clear case of ill-treatment, and it had all come about because Mrs. Gibson could not bear her neighbour, Miss Franks, to say that my tail was not quite a fashionable length. Twice I had been sacrificed for fashion, twice tortured to satisfy the petty whims of women.

"There is one comfort left to me, I cannot be docked again, because there is nothing left to dock, while many of my less fortunate brethren have been made to go through the terrible ordeal as many as three times to satisfy the wishes of different owners. All that night I tossed about, restless and feverish; there was scarcely a place on my poor bruised body which did not hurt me.

"The next morning Mr. Gibson had calmed down, and I think even he was a little taken aback when he saw the result of the severe beating he had given me.

"He was a very hasty-tempered man, and

I believe he really felt sorry for me, for he told one of the men to bathe my wounds, and gave orders that I was to be well taken care of, and to do nothing until I was quite well again. Whether it was fear of punishment for himself, or regret for what he had done, I shall never know, but it is certain that I was well looked after for the rest of my stay at the farm.

"I believe Mr. Gibson might even have kept me, and we might have become comparative friends, but Mrs. Gibson said she couldn't bear the sight of such an evil-tempered beast, and when I heard her say these unkind words all the old sore feelings came back again, and I felt that I should never do any good at the farm."

"Poor, dear Dandy, how it must have hurt you to hear yourself called such horrid names."

"Well, Elf, strangely enough I did not mind so much as you might think, and ever since that memorable night when Mr. Gibson banged me about so much, and hurt my poor head so badly, I have felt from time to time a curious numbness of brain, and sometimes I cannot think or feel properly,

and I grow stupid and dazed. I always feel so, so tired and spiritless, and I do as I am told, when I understand what is required of me, for all desire to get my own way has left me, and all the fight has gone out of me for ever."

"Who bought you from Mr. Gibson, Dandy?"

"A Mr. Jones, a London cab-driver."

"Is he kind to you?"

"Sometimes he is very kind, especially when he has had a good day; but so often we have a bad one, for all the people want to go in taxis nowadays, it is so much quicker than going in a cab."

"I know, Dandy; they are something like motor cars, and though I have often tried to race the motors we meet on the road, I have never beaten one yet."

"If my present master has a very bad day, he gets cross and depressed, and then he shouts at me and frightens me very much; but he has never given me more than just a flick or two of the whip."

"When we reach home, after a bad day, instead of giving me a sponge down, and a good supper, master goes off to a public-

house, which is near, and as often as not forgets to take me out of the cab, and I am left standing in the yard. Sometimes he remembers to throw a rug over my back, but sometimes he doesn't, and then I feel very cold. When he comes back to the stable-yard he is generally too drunk to know what he is doing, and more than once I have been left harnessed to my cab all night, very cold and very hungry."

"How patiently you speak of such awful hardships, poor Dandy."

"What is the good of doing anything else, Elf? I feel I get on better with man, and save myself from beatings, if I am patient and don't make a fuss. My only course now is to bear things. My hard life must end some day. Perhaps if I have another master things may be easier for me. I know Mr. Jones will have to sell me soon, for he is nearly bankrupt now, and business grows worse every day. He used to have a son called Bob, who sent him money every week, and this was a great help; but Bob died a short time ago, and so no more money comes from him.

"Last Thursday we had a very unlucky

day. Only one fare in the morning—a cross, nervous old gentleman, who had run himself late for his train and blamed master and me because he missed it. I did my best, my very best, but as we drove into the station the man's train steamed out, and he was so angry that he paid master threepence short of the proper fare, not to mention the usual tip.

"A lot of angry words passed between the gentleman and my master ; but it was all of no avail, he never got that threepence which was lawfully his. This made him very cross and irritable.

"The sun shone brightly, and no one hailed us off the stand after we returned from taking the cross old man to his station. I was hungry, for I had had very little to eat as times were so bad, and very tired, and I longed to go home to rest, though my stable was now miserably poor and dirty. Instead of going home at ten o'clock, as we generally had done lately, master said we must try for a fare coming out of one of the theatres, so we took up a stand near the Savoy.

"Patiently and quietly we waited, next to a hansom driver, who was a friend of

master's, and until the play was over the two men talked of the very bad times they were having.

"The play ended, the theatre doors were thrown open by men in livery and the gay, happy crowd came out. The piece had evidently been a good one, judging from the enthusiasm of the people. Master stopped talking to the hansom driver, and held up his hand to show that he was disengaged, and called out repeatedly, 'Cab, sir?' 'Cab, lady?' while his friend tried to outbid him with 'Hansom, sir?' 'Hansom, lady?' but all we heard was, 'Can you get me a taxi, porter?' 'Yes, lady, number six,' and then number six would disappear for a moment or two, and then return standing on the step of a taxi, calling out his number; and the fare, to whom he had given it, stepped quickly forward, popped a sixpence into the porter's hand as he or she gave an address, and with a bang the taxi-door closed and then passed quickly out of sight,

"This same scene was repeated again and again, only varying in the porter's number. Footmen in grand livery went forward as they recognised their own special parties,

and escorted them to one or other of the many private motors and carriages which lined the ranks.

"At last only one party remained, and the hansom driver and my master stopped their cry of 'Cab, sir? 'Hansom, sir?' and sat with reins held loosely, each full of eager hope that he might be chosen, as there was no rival taxi in sight.

"The little group of three noticed the pathetic silence of the two drivers, and they remarked to each other, if only we had not sent that porter off to fetch a taxi; but even as the words were spoken, a taxi whizzed up and the familiar scene was repeated, and we were left a silent quartette in a silent street. Without a word we went back again into the Strand and joined the busy thoroughfare of moving, ever-moving people.

"Master, with a 'Good-night, mate,' to the hansom driver, went in one direction, while he took the other; and after a few more fruitless attempts to get a fare, master took me home—that was the worst day we had ever had.

"Contrary to his usual conduct towards me, after a bad day, master gave me a

terribly good supper, and made me as comfortable as he could for the night. He was so kind and gentle that I felt quite puzzled, and I was just wondering what made master so different, when he suddenly fell forward and lay on the stable-floor at my feet, quite still and motionless. He had fainted from sheer hunger. For some hours he lay quite still and I kept guard, and when an evil-looking rat crept stealthily towards him and tried to curl itself upon his coat, I neighed so loudly that it fled as if for its life. It was nearly light again before master moved, and then he had to catch hold of my legs to draw himself up, and he sighed and groaned as though he were in great pain, and he kept muttering in a voice still strangely gentle, 'Dandy, life be awful hard now; them taxis have come to stay. You are hungry, and I am hungry, for we cannot earn our keep, and there ain't no Bob to help us now.'

"I tried to comfort master, and I felt a real liking for the poor old man who had really done his best for me. He went off for a cup of coffee, and when he came back he was greatly revived; and now, dear Elf,

I shall have to stop, for I see my master coming to fetch me, and yours is not far off. My talk with you has made me feel happy, the first time for many weeks."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DANDY'S LAST DAYS.

MASTER gave orders for me to be brought to him, and I saw him stare hard at the Dandy, turn away as if in doubt, and then look again.

I gave a soft neigh, as I generally do when I want to convey something to master's mind, and I was so anxious for him to recognise Dandy, because I felt sure he would do what he could to better his condition. I think my neigh really did convince him that he was not dreaming, and that in very truth he was gazing at my poor friend. I saw master go up to Mr. Jones and enter into earnest conversation with him, and before he came back to me he spoke a few words to the Dandy and patted his neck.

As we drove away from the bazaar, master called out to Mr. Jones, who was looking at the card which master had given to him with a most puzzled expression on his face :

"Remember, to-morrow morning, Jones, at eleven o'clock sharp."

When I reached home I told Eros and Chanticler about my unexpected meeting with the Dandy, and they were intensely interested in hearing all I had to tell.

We wondered what Mr. Jones' visit would portend, but we all felt certain that it was significant of some good fortune for poor Dandy. Even Minnie, who, by the bye, was growing very fat, ceased to purr in her contented happiness, and listened to all I had to say with quite an understanding look on her face. The glory and success of my performance at the bazaar was being discussed as quite a secondary thing, when Chanticler, who I thought was not paying attention, interrupted me quite suddenly and said :

"What did you say is the name of the Dandy's present master?"

"Jones," I answered rather shortly, for I

didn't like Chanticler not to be interested, and it was very rude of her to interrupt.

"Why, that's the name of the boy who never brought master his change out of the sovereign he gave him, when he fell off his bicycle racing you, Elf, nearly two years ago."

"So it is," said Eros; "what a remarkably good memory you have, Chanticler."

"Yes," I chimed in, "and he had a son, called Bob, who used to send him money; but he is dead now. I do wonder why he never brought that change back, for I feel sure he was honest."

"I don't know, Elf," said Eros, "but perhaps his father will be able to throw some light on the subject."

We were all very eager for the next morning to come, and as the stable clock struck eleven, Mr. Jones, seated on the box of his shabby, rickety old cab, drove into the yard. Master, who is the soul of punctuality, and never keeps anyone waiting, appeared in a moment or two, and Mr. Jones climbed slowly down from his seat, and stood hat in hand, nervously pulling at his hair.

"Now, Jones," began master; but Jones interrupted him.

"Before we comes to bisness, please, yer honour, I has something to give yer from my son, Bob; if so be ye're the same 'Mr. Hingram' as lent him that soverin nigh on a couple of years ago, to keep him from getting the sack from his master, when he tumbled off his bicycle and broke all them heggs and spoiled a whole good chicken."

Master was puzzled for a few minutes, and then he seemed to remember, and told Mr. Jones that he had some time ago lent a boy a pound who had fallen off his bicycle, who had given his name as Bob Jones. "He was to pay his master for the broken eggs and damaged fowl, and to bring me the change. I had nothing less than a sovereign in my pocket at the time, I recollect; and the boy's honest face tempted me to trust him. I went abroad almost directly after the episode, and it had quite gone out of my memory. I cannot think just now how much change was to be returned to me."

"I got it right enough, I has. Bob gave it to I afore he went off to foreign parts,

and 'oped I would be more lucky in finding of yer honour than he was. He lost that bit of paper yer gave him with yer address on, but remembered the name 'Hingram,' and most his last words to me, afore he went off, were, 'Don't forget to try to find Mr. Hingram, father, for he trusted me, he did.'"

This was evidently a long speech for poor Mr. Jones to make, and beads of perspiration stood on the old man's forehead as he nervously fumbled with some big tacking threads inside his coat, and after a few moments, Eros and I, who were eagerly watching to see what would happen next, saw Mr. Jones hand to master a small, dirty-looking parcel.

Afraid to hurt the poor father's feelings by objecting to touch the offering—for it really was very dirty—master opened the parcel, and there, safely wrapped inside, were the fourteen shillings and threepence he should have had so long ago, and the Dandy had told me how often his master and he had gone to bed hungry, especially before they had left London and settled in the little Surrey village where they now lived.

It was certain that Mr. Jones was as honest as his son Bob had been, or master's money would not have been carried about for so long untouched. To them there was but one Mr. Ingram in the world, the one to whom, at all costs, that fourteen shillings and threepence was to be returned.

When this unexpected "bisness" was over, the real object of Mr. Jones' visit to the park was gone into, and the upshot of it was that money was given to Mr. Jones to pay off his debts, and arrangements were to be quickly made for the old man and the Dandy to live at one of master's many surrounding farms, and in less than a fortnight from their memorable visit to the park, the Dandy and the old cab-driver were settled in what proved to be their last home, and a very happy one it was for both man and horse.

Mr. Jones, freed from the worry of debt, and by master's orders given a very easy time by the farm bailiff, grew almost young again, and spent several years at the farm; but the Dandy did not fare quite so well; he couldn't be put out to grass during the long hot summer which followed his arrival

at the farm, because he was helpless to protect himself from the flies; but he had a nice box in a beautifully airy stable, and was out as much as possible.

The winter came, and I began to hear from time to time that the Dandy was failing. He grew less and less strong, and when the cold weather came he had a sharp attack of pneumonia from which he only partially recovered, though he had the best and most tender attention from master's own veterinary surgeon.

On the night of Christmas Eve, the Dandy grew suddenly ill again, and before morning broke had breathed his last, with his beautiful head resting against the old cab-driver's rheumatic legs. The life in which there had been so much unnecessary pain and suffering was ended, and Ricketts told us the sad news at the park just as the church bells rang out their Christmas note of joy and peace.

The Dandy was buried, as befitted his breeding and former position, in the beautiful huge meadow set aside by dear master for that purpose. The lowly state to which he had sunk in later life was

forgotten, and all of us at the park rejoiced at the honour given to our lost friend. Eros and Chanticler and I talked long and earnestly of all we had learnt from the Dandy; and, dear humans, if any of you have my book given to you as a present next Christmas Day, will you make a solemn resolve in your minds to do everything in your power to prevent, from henceforth, horses being made to suffer as the Dandy suffered?

About this time many changes took place at the park, for master sold several of his horses, and Eros and Chanticler were amongst the number. I felt very lonely without my two companions; for of course I was left, and I know that master will never part with me: I could bear loneliness or anything rather than that. My mother, Lady Beechwood, had gone some time ago, and of all my old stable friends only Minnie and Clasper remained.

Sometimes I caught a glimpse of the toy terrier, Moses, sporting like a young fawn on the lawns near the house; but he still kept away from my stable, so I suppose he has not yet forgotten Minnie's unfriendly

attack upon him, now quite a long while ago.

From time to time I have mentioned one or other of the various dogs living at the park, and in my next chapter I will tell you a little about some of my favourites amongst them.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ELF TELLS ABOUT SOME OF THE DOGS
AT THE PARK, AND SHOWS HOW LADDIE
BECAME A HERO.

AFTER Eros and Chanticler had gone, master stayed with me in my stable for a much longer time than he had usually done when he paid his customary morning visit, and as Ricketts generally took this opportunity to talk over things with master, and to tell him any piece of interesting news about the animals, I heard a good deal. A number of dogs were always in master's wake, and I am going to write this chapter specially about them.

I have already mentioned Clasper, who, by the bye, is still as lazy as ever, and he manages in a very clever way to get quite a fair number of motor rides. When he sees the car come round he jumps on to the seat

by the chauffeur, and down into the tonneau of the car. He then creeps under the seat and lies there perfectly still until all who are going in the car that day have taken their places. Still he does not move, for Clasper is much too wise to risk being turned out. So he waits until the motor has got some miles from home, and then suddenly creeps out from his hiding-place, and expects everyone to be as pleased with him as he is with himself.

From what he tells me, I gather that the occupants of the car never fail to give him a nice welcome; but they do fail to tell Master Clasper that his presence in the motor has been known to them all the time, because his legs were not tucked properly under the seat, and were really a source of danger to himself, and discomfort to the motorists. No, clever Clasper never knew all this.

The Newfoundland, Nero, and the fox-terrier, Dan, whose life he had saved when a puppy, were still inseparable companions, just as were the new arrivals, Laddie, and the small Pomeranian, whose thick standing out black coat had won for her the name of Golliwog.

The two large dogs were invariably to be seen walking rather sedately together, while Dan and Golly frisked about as their size and age, and spirits permitted. If any stranger dog dared to approach either of the two, Laddie and Nero instantly sprang forward to protect them from harm, and the intruder was generally glad to slink away, with his ears back, and his tail between his legs, quite realising that he had had a really narrow escape from punishment.

Sometimes, when out for a stroll in the park, Nero and Laddie would pick out a soft grassy mound, on which the sun was shining, and throw themselves down to bask in the warmth of its rays. No sooner was each comfortably stretched out, than Dan and Golly stopped all play, and made a dash for their respective companions. Golly, without word or ceremony, jumped on to Laddie's back, pulled him by his coat until he arranged himself for her comfort, and then went sound asleep, no light weight for Laddie to nurse for long. Dan was more thoughtful for Nero, for he always lay down, so that the Newfoundland had only to support his two front paws on his neck.

The four dogs would lie like this for a considerable time, and made quite a pretty picture with the bright sun shining on their well-kept coats.

One morning, out of pure mischief, Dan ran on in front of Golly, and settled himself on Laddie's back, and pretended to go to sleep. For a few minutes Golly stood and stared at Dan, scarcely believing her eyes that anyone dare take her place. Dan did not move, and Golly gave him a poke with her little black nose; but the terrier was in a mischievous mood and took no notice.

Golly then jumped on to Laddie, and began pawing and pushing Dan, just as she was accustomed to do to her big friend, without hurt to herself. Although Dan was really a nice-natured little dog, he neither could nor would stand such behaviour from Golly, and he pushed back, and the two began to bark and snap, both seated on Laddie's back and pinning him to the ground. Golly became frightened; but she in her way was as plucky as the terrier, and began to defend herself, and a rather serious fight ensued between the two little dogs.

At first Laddie could do nothing to stop

the fray, but when he was able to shake the quarrelling pair off his back, and to pick himself up, simultaneously with a cry of pain from the little Pom, he made a dart for Dan, and grasping him in his mouth by the scruff of his neck, gave the poor terrier a good shaking, and then putting him gently down again, walked off in high dudgeon, followed by the faithful Golly.

Nero glared at the two as they went towards the house, and then turned his attention to poor Dan, who, of course, was much more frightened than hurt, for Laddie would never harm a smaller dog than himself. Nero licked the poor shivering terrier all over, and comforted him as much as he could, and then they too walked towards the house, but they took a different road from the one Laddie and Golly had taken.

For some time after this there was a decided coolness between the two sets of friends, and I wondered how long the quarrel would last. It was rather sad, as day after day passed by, to see the dogs go off in pairs, but always in different directions, instead of together as they had always done before.

Then a day came when Laddie and Golly went off as usual; but Nero walked about the courtyard alone, sad, and miserable, and dejected. The little terrier was ill, and when Nero had gone to fetch him to take him out, he could scarcely raise his head from the soft, comfy pillow, which kind Ricketts had made for him in a warm, cosy corner of my stable.

All day long Nero walked restlessly in and out of the stable and about the yard, refusing to take his meals, or to be comforted by anyone except master. Dan had somehow or other got hold of something, which had very seriously upset him, and as the sorrowful day drew to a close he became so sick and weak, that the veterinary surgeon said that he could not live until the next morning. Nero lay at the foot of the little terrier's bed, where his eyes could rest upon him, and if anyone happened to come between him and his faithful friend, a feeble whine from Dan said as plainly as possible, "Please don't hide dear Nero from me."

During the night the poor little dog died, and from that moment until he was put into a small grave, in that part of the park which

was kept sacred for the pets who passed away, Nero never left guard over Dan's still, lifeless body. When Laddie and Golly knew that Dan was ill, they wanted very much to make up the quarrel; but they felt too shy to come into my stable to him, and hoped he would very soon be better and go out to them. When they heard that the little dog would never again run about the gardens and park, they could scarcely believe it; but when they saw Nero walking about alone, so sad and spiritless, they realised that his little companion and friend had really left him, and they both did everything in their power to comfort poor lonely Nero.

After a time it was a happier sight, for Laddie and Nero walked together again as of old, only the Pom had to play alone, and when the two bigger dogs basked in the sunshine, there was no cheeky little Dan to place two sturdy paws on Nero's neck and pin him to the ground.

Nearly two months had passed since Dan's death, when one morning at breakfast-time Laddie was found to be missing. Ricketts called for him and Evelyn too, and indeed everybody about the place, for the collie had

become a general favourite, but all the calling was in vain ; Laddie failed to answer to his name, which was a certain proof that he did not hear it called, for he was a very obedient dog.

Laddie's disappearance delayed all our breakfasts for some time, and as most of us had been disturbed very early by the clanging of the village fire-alarm, we felt cross and irritable. Golly refused to take more than a drink of milk, although the cook pressed quite a dainty piece of chicken upon her.

Hour succeeded hour, and still Laddie did not appear, and Ricketts became very anxious and upset, for master, who had been from home for a couple of nights, was due to return home late that evening.

One of the stable-lads, who had just returned from another fruitless search, suggested that the collie might have followed the village fire-engine, and Ricketts thought this not improbable.

The fire had been at a neighbouring mansion some five miles away, and as a last hope Ricketts asked the chauffeur to take the motor car along the road which the fire-engine had taken, to find out if he could see or hear

anything of Laddie. The chauffeur, a kind, good-natured man, and quite as anxious as Ricketts for the dog's safety, willingly did as he was asked and drove slowly towards the place where the fire had been, calling the lost collie's name from time to time.

The man soon reached the scene of the recent fire; it was a very lonely spot and the house had been left in the care of an old servant and his wife, all the family being abroad. The wing in which the fire had originated was burnt almost to the ground, but the united efforts of three or four fire-engines had managed to save the greater part of the massive old house, and no life had been lost, save that of a ten months-old baby daughter of the old caretaker's son, who, with its mother, was on a first visit to the proud grandparents.

The child had been left asleep in the very room where the fire began, and the whole place was one mass of flames before the mischief was discovered and the alarm given. There was no doubt either in the mother's mind or in the grandparents but that the little one had perished in the flames: anything else seemed impossible, and it was

with breaking hearts that the three had at last been persuaded to leave the building for the night, and to stay at the house of one of the gardeners.

Bailes (the chauffeur's name) thought he might as well look round when he reached the scene of the disaster, and he still called clearly "Laddie! Laddie!" though he had almost given up hope of now finding the dog. Bailes was just stepping into the car to return home, when he thought he heard a long, low whine. Immediately he paused to listen, and then called "Laddie! Laddie!" loudly and distinctly.

Then came the same long, piteous whine as before, and the sound seemed to come from a room on the second storey in the body of the building, which had adjoined the destroyed wing. Trembling with excitement, Bailes found his way into the house, and the continued whines of a dog led him to the room from whence they came.

He forced his way through the swing door, the baize covering of which was badly scorched and blackened, evidently by the fire. He found himself in a narrow passage, at the end of which a door stood open, and

seemed to be the entrance to the room from whence the cries of the dog proceeded. If it is Laddie, why doesn't he come to me, thought Bailes, and he hurried into the room, where a pathetic sight met his gaze. In a far corner lay a dark, curly-headed baby, its only covering a little nightdress; one thumb was tucked very tightly between two rosy lips, and the child was sleeping peacefully, while Laddie (for of course it was he) lay close beside it, pinned to the ground by a heavy oak beam, which had fallen from the ceiling and caught him by his two front paws. The baby by a miracle had escaped all harm.

When Laddie saw Bailes his joy knew no bounds, and it was the work of an instant for the man to remove the heavy oak beam from the poor dog's legs, which he found very badly crushed.

The dog's cries of joy awoke the baby, and she was just preparing to cry, when Bailes picked her up in his arms, and wrapped his own coat around the little form. Patting the faithful collie on the head and telling him he would be back in a few minutes, he went out to the car and drove with the baby to the nearest house, which

happened to be the very one where the poor mother was staying for the night.

With only a few hurried words of explanation, Bailes hastened back to Laddie, and lifting the great beast in his arms, carried him as gently as he had carried the child, to the car.

Laddie, in his anxiety to follow the fire-escape, had evidently taken a short cut to the burning house, and reached it just in time to save the sleeping child and to force his way into a safe part of the house. The fall of the burning wing must have loosened the oaken beam which fell and made poor Laddie a prisoner, preventing him from attracting the notice his instincts would otherwise have led him to do.

With a heart full of humble awe at the collie's evident patience and faithfulness, Rickett's poured out the tale I have just told you to dear master the morning after Laddie's disappearance.

Bailes had returned too late from fetching Laddie to meet master's train the night before, and it had been early morning before the carriage, which had gone for him, reached the park, and he had only heard a hurried

account of the dog and the fire, in explanation of the carriage meeting him at the station instead of the motor car, which he had ordered and which would have got him home so much more quickly.

When Bailes returned to the park with Laddie, the dog was much too unwell to come amongst us that night, and for a few days we did not see him because of his poor crushed paws, which were very painful and made it impossible for him to get about. Still we all knew and felt he was safe, and we were very proud of his act of heroism, and little Golly kept running to tell us all he told her, at different intervals, while he was a prisoner.

Directly Laddie was better, master had him photographed with Golliwog sitting beside him, and so I am able to put his picture in my book. There is also an earlier one of Dan, sitting up very straight and good; but he looks a little sad because Nero, who ought to be beside him, could not be persuaded to face the camera, and the poor terrier had been so anxious to be "taken" with his big, noble-looking friend beside him, and had mournfully said to Golly that he was afraid

DAN SITTING UP STRAIGHT AND GOOD



Spinks]

FADDIE AND GOLLYWOG

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Nero didn't care for him so very much, after all ; but I am sure it was not want of affection for Dan which made Nero object to being photographed, for he would never be "taken" either with anyone or alone, and any attempt in that direction made him very cross, and if anyone tried to snapshot him, he seemed to know what was happening by instinct, and would growl and try to hide himself. Nero was a very funny dog in this respect and not at all like the rest of us, who are always very pleased to have our pictures taken.

CHAPTER XX.

LYRIC AND THE DENTIST.

I WAS very excited to see who would come to be my new stable companions, and take the places which the sale of my mother, Eros, and Chanticler had left vacant.

I had not long to wait, for very soon a handsome roan, called Lyric, was established in Chanticler's old box. Lyric had belonged to a fiery old colonel, who had borne with him as long as he could, in fact until he had thrown the distinguished officer's person on to a stone-heap, and then run away, which resulted in the fixed determination of the soldier to get rid of Lyric as a nasty, bad-tempered beast.

Colonel Saunders was an old friend of my master's, and honestly told him how difficult Lyric was to manage when he made him an offer for the horse, and said straight out that

he did not think anyone could manage the beast if he couldn't.

Master was not discouraged in the least by this information—in fact, between ourselves, I think he was rather encouraged in Lyric's favour, anyhow the nasty, bad-tempered, unmanageable beast came to live in my stable. The first time master took Lyric out he noticed that he pulled all on one rein, a sure sign that there was something wrong with his teeth, so they only went for a short ride, and when they got back to the stable, master at once sent a message for Mr. Polson, the dentist, to come without delay to examine Lyric's mouth.

Horses need the services of a dentist quite as much, if not more, than humans do, for a defective tooth is often the cause of very terrible suffering, and the sole reason of many disagreeable and dangerous vices in a horse, which are generally put down to the vicious, nasty temper of the beast by the ignorant and uninitiated.

When Lyric knew that the dentist was coming to look at his mouth, he was very frightened, just as frightened as you are, little children, when you climb into that

much-dreaded chair, and have to face the cruel light which will show up the tears you so bravely struggle to keep back and hide. Lyric told me of his fears, just as you whisper yours to mother or nurse, and I tried to comfort him, just as they comfort you.

I told him that the dentist might hurt him a little, but that he must not be afraid, for Mr. Polson was one of the most humane and gentle of men, and that master would never employ a rough or unsympathetic dentist to attend to any of us.

Lyric believed what I told him, and I must say he was very brave, for he showed less fear of Mr. Polson, when he appeared on the scene and began to feel about in his mouth, than any horse I have ever known.

It is true that Lyric trembled a little, and backed once or twice; but Mr. Polson always arranged for his patient of the moment to have plenty of room to back, without coming in contact with his manger; a horse seldom rears if he can move backwards, and of course he has to face the light when his teeth are being examined, just as you children do.

I listened eagerly to hear the report on poor Lyric's teeth, for Mr. Polson looked very serious, and was a long time before he spoke. Then he told master that Lyric had some very badly broken and jagged teeth at the very back of his mouth, which were keeping the inside of his poor cheek quite raw, and which must hurt him horribly, whenever the bit was in his mouth.

"Poor creature," said master, "no wonder he is restive and tries to run away. It is quite evident from what you say that Lyric has been trying, but, alas, in vain, to get away from pain. I don't believe he has any vice or ill-will in his nature; but time will prove."

Mr. Polson took the broken teeth out very cleverly with his modern and up-to-date practical instruments, and Lyric's mouth very quickly began to heal.

As soon as it was quite right again, but not until, master began to ride Lyric, and one morning I heard him tell Ricketts that he considered him a most affectionate and docile animal, and although I felt just a momentary pang of jealousy, I was really glad for master's conquest over a horse

which had come to him with such a character. It was surely something to make me, and the other horses at the park, feel very proud of his influence, that wonderful influence over the animal world and mind which has done, and still does, so much for the benefit of our kind.

The one secret of good horsemanship is kindness, the ruling power love. Horses, if properly treated and looked after, are grateful and trusting to a degree. They seldom forget a kind act, and often, very often, forgive an unkind one, in spite of their extreme sensitiveness to pain and hurt. It is only when man stoops—either from thoughtlessness, ignorance, or, low be it spoken, from sheer brutality and superior power—to inflict an unforgettable and unforgivable hurt, that the horse becomes his enemy.

We all love master because he has so much love for us, and has made a study of our individual natures. He understands us quite as well as if we really spoke the human language. If ever a horse he is either riding or driving pulls very much, carries his head on one side, foams or slobbers at the mouth,

directly he gets home that horse is put into the dentist's hands, and to prevent our teeth from going seriously wrong, and to check any signs of decay, or damage to the cheek, as in the case of Lyric, Mr. Polson regularly pays a visit to the park twice a year, and thoroughly examines the mouth of every horse on the premises.

Much more depends on keeping a horse's mouth right than the ordinary horse owner knows, for sharp, uneven, and defective teeth give rise to much more serious evils than a raw cheek, and surely that is bad enough for a poor horse to have to endure. Digestive troubles, leading to all kinds of disorders and vices, are very often solely the result of neglected teeth, and these must, and ought to be, constantly looked after by a thoroughly qualified horse dentist, and not left to the care of just any novice, who will nip or break off a tooth too long, instead of extracting it, and cause much unnecessary suffering to the poor victim.

Lyric and I had many long talks together, for as yet no other new horses had come to fill the place either of my mother or Eros. Lyric told me how hard he had tried to do

as Colonel Saunders wished, but that always his cheek had hurt him so much that the only thing he could think of was how to get away from the pain, the terrible ever-present pain in his poor face.

Now that he had got away from pain—or, more correctly, that master had had the cause of it removed—Lyric felt up to anything, and was really a very valuable horse, gentle and docile, and he told me that he could and would do anything for dear master.

I said that nearly all of us felt like that at the park, and how I wished that all horses could have a kind, understanding master like ours, for, little friends, it just makes the difference to us that a good nurse would make to you, if you had ever had the misfortune to be in the care of an ignorant and careless one.

Soon after Lyric's mouth was healed, master went to Hungary again, and he again saw poor Grace, and learnt that her master was still unable to do anything with her, and Black Bruce was still waiting for the horse, who had been fashioned to pair with him, and who in the fashioning had conceived such a horror of man and man's

power, that master very much feared whether she would ever again trust herself in man's hands.

Grace's owner was very full of remorse for the harm his thoughtless acquiescence in a barbarous deed had wrought in her, and he would allow no beating or brute force to be used in the hope of gaining her submission. He tried hard to win her confidence again by every act in his power, and it was ever a bitter pill to the kind, sensitive man that a once gentle, trusting little mare such as Grace had been, should be afraid of his approach.

So strong and retentive is memory in horses, that the year Grace had been put out to grass had made little if any difference in her demeanour towards man; she could not forget the sharp instrument, the smell of charred bone, and last, but not least, her inability to dash away the flies which tortured her so much all through the long summer days.

Grace's master has a lot of horses, like mine has, and there was one amongst them called Minnie. She was three years old, and so nervous that her trainer could do

nothing with her; so when master was staying with Mr. Montague, he persuaded him to let our trainer try what he could do. Minnie was a trotting horse, like I am, and after she had been in the hands of our trainer for a short time she was entered for her first race.

Just before it was to take place she was trembling in every limb, and as she was very thin, master said her beautiful gazelle-like eyes looked larger than ever. Our trainer talked to her very gently and quietly, both before and during the race, and Minnie won, won in spite of her nervousness and trembling limbs; and now she is not nearly such a frightened little creature as she used to be.

Master says she is the fastest trotter of her age and size he has ever seen, and he wanted her master to sell her to him; but Mr. Montague only said :

"Do what you like with the crazy thing. She will do anything and everything for you, and your man, while I can do nothing with her; but still I want to keep Minnie for my own, I love those great wonderful eyes of hers." And so master had to come

home without Minnie, and Lady Beechwood's stall remained empty; but a young horse called Eros II. was put into my brother's place

When master left home again, Eros II. was just being broken in, and he was very fearless and high-spirited, and afraid of no one. You will therefore imagine master's surprise, when, on his return, he went towards Eros II. to pet him, to see the horse flinch and crouch in fear. Master at once inquired into the cause of this, and then he reluctantly learnt from Ricketts that the man he had trusted with Eros II. was a drinker, and that he had beaten the poor young horse most unmercifully to make him do as he wished and thus made him afraid of man.

Fancy such a thing happening at the park. Master was furious; I don't think I have ever known him so angry, and the man was dismissed at once, and I am sure it will be no use his applying to master for a character, for he won't get one if he does. Master cannot forgive any act of unkindness to us.

In time Eros II. overcame his fears, and now he promises to be a first-rate trotting horse, like my brother, his namesake.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE ELF GIVES SOME USEFUL INFORMATION.

I soon became quite happy and at home with Eros II., whose youth made him very anxious to converse with experienced horses like Lyric and myself. He wanted to know how dear master had found out so quickly that he had been badly treated by the man in whose charge he had been left during his absence, and I told him that he would soon notice for himself how very observant master is, and that he can always tell when a horse had been bullied or frightened by man, because when this has been the case the horse which has so suffered always flinches at the approach of man, just as you, Eros II. did, even though it happened to be our own dear master.

The horse, like most animals, distinguishes chiefly by sound and scent, so when master went quickly up to Eros II., he saw only a

man, and man had been unkind to him, and so he started back and flinched in fear. This show of timidity opened master's eyes, and inquiries proved his surmises to be right, and the man who had bullied and beaten Eros II. never had another chance of venting his brutality on any horse at the park. Master took good care of that, and as I have told you before, sent him off at a moment's notice.

"Master is clever," answered Eros II.; "before that man began to beat me, I wasn't afraid of anyone; but when he made me feel how much he had the power to hurt me, I became so terrified that the sight of a man made me tremble all over."

"All the same, Eros II.," I said, "I do think you ought to know master when you see and hear him. I never mistake his footsteps."

"Perhaps I shall be as wise as you, dear Elf, when I have known master as long," humbly answered Eros II.; and Lyric chimed in, "Yes, and you'll learn to love him, as we do, for you won't be able to help yourself."

I noticed Lyric said "As 'we' do, and I

thought it was rather cheek of him to class himself with me; but, after all, it was only a little thing and would not lessen master's love for me, so I let the remark pass without comment.

Since the new horses had come, master and Ricketts spent a good deal of time in my stable; and now, dear humans, I am going to tell you some of the things I heard them talk about, because they all bear on making the life of the horse happy, comfortable, and useful.

The first thing I will take is the horse's bit, which is of paramount importance to him and indirectly to you. If a horse is improperly bitted, it hurts his mouth, which is very sensitive, and makes him restive and often sets him kicking. Some humans are silly enough to ask "How a horse's mouth can affect his heels." It does not take much common sense to realise that if a horse is comfortably bitted and harnessed, he will go along steadily and quietly; but if, on the other hand, he has a severe bit in his mouth and his reins are in the hands of a bad driver pulling and jaggling at this soft, tender organ, it is no wonder that he

becomes irritable. Then all the little things put him out which otherwise he would scarcely notice, just as you little humans worry and fidget when some arrangement in your dress feels tight or stiff, as in the case of a boy's collar rubbing his neck.

When a horse grows irritable, the results are often serious, so everything should be done to avoid annoying him unnecessarily.

Master always uses for us a plain snaffle-bit with a large, smooth mouthpiece, instead of the severe curb-bit so generally used at the present time.

In the cold weather our bits are always slightly warmed before being put into our mouths. Otherwise the bit, on a frosty morning, feels like a piece of hot iron and literally burns the flesh. Horses know this only too well, and this fact, in many cases, accounts for a horse's objection to have the bit put into his mouth.

If you would like, dear humans, to prove the truth of what I say, the next time it is frosty or very cold, leave a piece of steel out all night and in the morning put it against your bare arm. I know you won't keep it there for long; yet poor horses, whose attendants and

owners are ignorant of this fact, are constantly inflicting this pain of burning on the horses under their care.

Master, too, is very particular about our reins, and he insists on our having all possible freedom. The bearing-rein, so cruel in keeping a horse's head fixed in one position, and that a most unnatural one, is unknown at the park.

None of us wear blinkers, and we can always see where we are going, and so do not get frightened when we hear a noise. We can see what makes the noise, and we all know that noise won't hurt us, and so we don't begin to back and kick; but just go on as though all were quiet.

Think how you would feel, little friends, if you could only hear dreadful sounds, and not know the cause; while if you can see what is making the noise, you are generally pleased instead of frightened, aren't you?

In the summer, when the flies are very tiresome, master allows us to wear fly-nets, and if this is necessary for our comfort—for of course we all have the full benefit and use of our tails—how much more must a fly-net be indeed a necessity to such horses as the

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THE HILL, AS OBTAINED BY NATURE.

Hugh Penold

poor Dandy and the hackney, Nancy, whose picture I am putting in my book?

I want you to study her picture very, very thoughtfully, and notice the difference between her tail as man designed it, and mine, left as Nature ordained it; and I feel sure you will long more than ever to abolish the cruel practice of cutting horses' tails, and you will do all in your power to prevent the horses in future from suffering such disfigurement.

Poor Nancy, a very fine horse in every other way, is just an eyesore to you and to me, with her housemaid's brush of a tail; but the very thing which offends us is of great account at the Hackney Horse Show, where Nancy has taken many prizes. No "undocked" Hackney may enter the Show ring, and it is very sad to think how much cruelty this great Show is responsible for, and what a glorious opportunity for a most humane work the Society neglects by insisting on this barbarous disfigurement as a qualification for entry to its Shows.

If the Society could only be persuaded to issue a command, saying that from henceforth no "Docked Hackney" would be

allowed entrance to its Shows, one of the most useful classes of horses would reap benefit beyond all words, and the Hackney of the near future would be a much more pleasing sight than it is at the present time.

I have not been able to get a picture of the Dandy for my book ; but at the time of his death his tail very much resembled that of poor Nancy.

Our feet, too, are always very carefully and comfortably shod, and although none of us like the heavy, iron shoes when we first begin to wear them, we do not mind them after a time. Master has our shoes put on by a first-rate blacksmith, who thoroughly understands the anatomy of our feet, and this is much more important to the future usefulness and comfort of the horse than many a blacksmith has any idea of, and I wish all humans who make horse-shoeing a profession would read and study carefully the little book entitled "Horse Sense," which can be bought from almost any bookseller for one shilling.

And now, little people, I must stop telling you these technical things, or you will be saying to yourselves, the Elf promised to

write a story, and we don't call facts about shoeing and bits, etc., a story, so I will try to think of something more interesting to tell you.

The other day master went to a race meeting, and he was suddenly attracted by seeing a horse, he seemed to know, dragging a heavy load of people up to the racecourse. Master looked again at the poor, struggling beast, and made a step forward to remonstrate with the driver. Imagine his disgust when he recognised the man as one to whom he had given the horse some years ago, on the understanding that he was to let it do only very light work.

Master's indignation and contempt for such a flagrant betrayal of trust was too great for words, and throwing the man a sum of money, he made one of his own grooms take the poor, ill-used creature back to the park at once.

He was far too angry to care or bother as to how the people whom Gipsy had been made to bring to the races were to get back to their respective homes, for in his opinion not one of them should have been so cowardly as to let a horse in such a condition, as he found

poor Gipsy to be in, carry any one of the even for a yard, and Gipsy had brought them over ten miles that morning.

Master had poor Gipsy carefully attended to; but her worn-out and badly-wounded legs were in such an awful condition, and gave her such incessant pain, that the only kind thing left to do for her was to have her shot. Master felt it was the best and most merciful reparation he could make to Gipsy, and when he heard the sound of the distant instantaneous shot which placed her beyond all suffering, master made a solemn vow that he would never again give an old horse away.

For Gipsy's sake, every horse too old for work at the park, even if still capable of doing very light jobs, should go direct to the farm, whereso many pensioners, as master calls the horses he sends there, are spending the remainder of their lives in happy, well-deserved idleness. Master would never again run the risk of a fate like Gipsy's befalling any one of us.

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VAN DYKE, AS DESIGNED BY MAN.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE ELF IS TAKEN TO SEE THE CORONATION ILLUMINATIONS OF 1911.

THERE was a feeling of great excitement at the park, and we heard lots of talk amongst the men of a great event which was timed to take place on June 22nd, 1911.

They spoke of the affair as "The Coronation," and everything seemed to be arranged to take place either before or after it, but the whole day on which the ceremony was to come off was kept strictly free from engagements.

We soon learnt the meaning of the word "Coronation," and we grew almost as keen about the crowning of King George V. and Queen Mary as the excited humans around us.

We heard about the wonderful decorations to be seen in the busy London streets,

especially along the route the King and Queen would drive on their way to the London church called Westminster Abbey where all the Kings and Queens of England are crowned.

Even our little village was gay with many coloured flags, and the two triumphal arches bearing the words "God save the King" and "Long live the King," were masterpieces of country art and enterprise.

The longed-for day came at last, and although it was rather cold and sunless, there was a general feeling in the air of rejoicing and festivity. When Lyric and I were out exercising and first saw the flapping flags we wondered if they would hurt us; but by and by we grew less timid and tried to enter into the spirit of joy and gladness which we felt around us on every side.

Little Evelyn Ricketts had gone up to London the day before to stay with an aunt so that she might see the wonderful sights there. She had come to say good-bye to me, and told me that her father had said she would see more horses than she had ever seen in her life before, and amongst them the wonderful and beautiful cream horse

which draw the State carriage on very grand occasions.

About five o'clock in the afternoon of the Coronation Day, Evelyn rushed into my stable to see her Daddy, as she called Ricketts, and to tell him about all she had seen, and so I heard too.

"Daddy," she said, after kissing him affectionately, "I have had a lovely day. Auntie and I got up ever so early this morning, afore you did, I 'spect. We had some breakfast, and then Auntie took me to Pall Mall, where we found the seats which Mr. Ingram had taken for us.

"The decorations were lovely, Daddy, and the soldiers and the dear horses, and the thousands and thousands of people made me feel all thrilly; and oh, I did want you, Daddy and Mother, to be there." Here the little voice grew sad, for Mrs. Ricketts was very ill.

"When we got to our seats, although it was still very early, we found heaps of people there already, and Auntie told me that I should have to sit still and be a good girl, for the King and Queen would not pass for many hours. The time didn't seem so very

long, Daddy, because the band played and people kept coming, and carriages and motors rushed past on their way to the Abbey. Everything and everybody were grand and smart, and all seemed so happy and glad.

"At last the carriages of the Royal children began to come, such a long, long string of them. In the last but one, Daddy, I saw Princess Mary and her brothers; and Daddy, she wore a tiny baby crown and a beautiful red velvet robe, and I wish I could be a princess and ride in a grand carriage," said little Evelyn; and I saw Ricketts pick her up in his arms, and as he kissed her, I heard him say, "Anyhow, darling, you are Mother's princess and mine," which I thought was very nice of him; and I think Evelyn thought so too, for she nestled lovingly in his arms as she continued to tell him about all she had seen in London.

"After the Royal children's carriage had passed, and the soldiers, which Auntie called their bodyguard, had gone by, the band played 'God save the King,' and then came the wonderful State coach drawn by twelve cream horses, and inside sat the King

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and Queen; and Daddy, the Queen smiled at me, and so I smiled back to her. Auntie said she would like me to smile, because she loves—she loves little children"; and then I noticed that Evelyn's head had sunk down into her father's neck and a drowsy voice murmured once more, "She loves little children," and then ceased altogether. Evelyn was fast asleep, and her father carried her off to the house.

There was no doubt but that Evelyn had had a very happy time; and Lyric and I were so pleased, because Evelyn was always so kind to all of us, especially to me.

You can imagine my excitement, little friends, when shortly after Ricketts had carried his little daughter up to her room, and placed her gently on her bed to get the sleep which she had missed in order to be in her place to see England's King and Queen go by, on their way to be crowned, master came into my stable and gave orders for me to be ready harnessed to my cart as soon as it began to grow dark.

"You are not going to take the Elf out to-night, sir, surely?" I heard Ricketts say.

"Why not, Ricketts?"

"She will be afeared of the lights."

"I will try her," answered my master, and so, on the night of the Coronation, although I was only a little over four years old, the age at which many horses have not even begun to be driven, master took me to see the wonderful illuminations which were a fitting close to that most eventful of eventful days.

As usual, master trusted to my instinctive obedience, and took no whip with him. He knew that I would be quiet and good, and not become restive and a source of danger to the seething mass of humanity, who soon found ourselves amongst them. They, too, had turned out to see the decorations and illuminations in honour of the King and Queen.

At first, I must confess, I did feel rather afraid of the hundreds and thousands of lights so sparkling and so brilliant. I neighed softly, as I always do when I am frightened, to tell master how I felt, and he understood, as he never fails to do, and assured me that nothing would or should hurt me. I believed him, and by-and-by

became calm enough to really enjoy the fun. Many of the horses I met looked dreadfully frightened, and I in my turn tried to comfort and reassure them. We could only get along very, very slowly, and often came to a standstill altogether, and so I talked to some of the horses within hearing.

In many cases I had only time to say a few words before master would give me the signal to move on ; but once I had quite a long conversation with a very smart, good-looking horse, who was called the General.

I could tell at once, from his appearance, that he had seen better days, and so it proved, for he told me that when King George's father, Edward VII., was crowned, he, with lots and lots of other horses, had helped to line one side of Pall Mall, the very street in which Evelyn had seen so much that morning.

The General told me that he had not felt very well that morning, and the heat and the noise had so upset him, and made him so very restive, that his master had been obliged to take him out of the rank lest he

should kick out too far, and hurt someone in the crowd.

"Wasn't he very angry?" I asked.

"I should just think he was, for it is awful disgrace for a soldier not to be able to manage his horse," meekly answered the General; but I really couldn't help being restive. My master refused to keep me after what he called my bad behaviour, and I have lived in various homes since he sold me. I did feel sorry to be no longer a trooper's horse, for I loved the gay, exciting life; but in time I got over it, and now although I have to work very hard and sometimes carry very heavy loads, I am not unhappy for I have a very good and kind master."

"I am so glad, General," I answered, "I have a good master, too."

"Anyone can see that with half an eye," said the General brusquely.

At this point the crowd moved on and went with them, the General and I becoming separated as we did so.

As we continued to drive slowly along the crowded streets, I heard the humans talking lovingly of their King and Queen who had been crowned that day. Repeatedly I

heard the words, "God bless the King," "God bless the Queen." First, perhaps, spoken softly by just two or three, and then gradually taken up by the whole of that massive, moving crowd; and I thought to myself, the humans love their King and Queen as I love master, who of course is my King, too, my very own King, and someday, which I sincerely trust may not be very far distant, I hope my King will have gained his most earnest wish, and that the "docking" of horses' tails will be an act of the barbarous past, and not the fashion of present-day civilization.

Yes, dear humans, my King and your King, too, are united in this humane desire, for on all sides I hear that George V. and Queen Mary of England will have no "docked" horses in either their stables or their troops. When master took me home again I felt very tired; but the sentiment of the humans had entered into my heart, and as Minnie, with a more impatient mien than usual bade me settle down for the night, I echoed the oft-repeated wish of the humans, which I had heard so many times that day: "Long live the King! God

bless the King!" and with these loyal thoughts in my mind, I prepared to settle off to sleep; but Minnie would not let me rest until I had told her about all the wonderful things I had seen.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

A RÉSUMÉ AND AN APPEAL.

AFTER the excitement of the Coronation was over, we settled down to our usual life at the park.

Eros II. promised to become even a finer horse and a swifter runner than my brother had been; and Lyric, with his mouth now quite healed and comfortable, was a most valuable creature, and a great favourite with master and all of us. More than once I heard Colonel Saunders say, when on a visit to the park, that he was quite sorry he had been so hasty in parting with Lyric; but Lyric told me, in confidence, that he was most thankful that he had come to live with dear master, because he feared that the old Colonel would never have found out what was causing the cruel pain in his mouth—the agonising perpetual pain of his poor

raw cheek, which had been hurting him for quite a long time, before in sheer desperation he had run away with his master in the hopes of getting away from the terrible burning sore in his mouth, which even a tiny pressure of the bit increased a hundred-fold.

Oh, yes, there was no doubting Lyric's evident joy that he had found a home at the park.

A beautiful young creature called Kitty Grey, now filled my mother's, Lady Beechwood's, old box, and my stable had its complete number of occupants.

Clasper came at intervals to tell us about the different hound trails in which he had taken part, and he always forgot to mention how much of the time he had managed to spend in master's motor car.

Laddie, Gollywog, and Nero, who were now as inseparable as the quartette had once been before the quarrel occasioned by Dan and Golly, often came to the stable and spent an hour or two with me, and we seldom let a day pass without mentioning Dan, whom we all missed very much.

Golly had the same bad habit of pinching legs on the sly as Moses had had, and I was

very much alarmed for her safety, because she was not nearly so agile as he had been in getting out of the way when her victims kicked out.

Minnie grew more and more exacting as her coat grew in beauty and thickness, and was still too proud to have anything to do with Tabby, the kitchen cat, which was really very snobbish of her; and Moses, when he paid his flying visits to me, was always in terror of Minnie's sharp claws.

I saw less and less of my beautiful friend Invicta, for her master had taken to travelling a great deal and very seldom came to the park now.

Another pair of horses brought Lord and Lady Durand to visit master instead of the Dandy and Czarina, and you will be pleased to hear that, although they both had docked tails, neither were so short as Lady Durand had commanded the poor Dandy's to be made. Czarina was driven in single harness, and as yet no other horse's tail has been docked short enough to pair with her.

Betty, grown quite a big girl now, though sweet and beautiful as ever, often came to the park, always on White Heather,

her inseparable companion, whose early promise of beauty had not disappointed any of us.

With Betty often, very often, came the lady she called "mother," riding on Folly, for Betty's father had bought the horse for her mother about the same time that Eros and Chanticler had been sold. Folly looked much, much more contented than she had ever done in the old days; and little Betty or rather big Betty now, quaintly said to Ricketts when he remarked on this, "That if Folly looked unhappy when she had a daughter like White Heather, it would be nearly as bad as if 'mother' wasn't pleased to have her, Betty, for her little girl."

Betty strongly believed in the power of children to make father and mother happy, and I think she was right, for even I have noticed the light which the appearance of a child will bring into the eyes of a grown-up human. It is a beautiful light and I love to see it, and I feel something like it come into my own face when the children are about, for I love them and they love me, and they never hurt them and they are always kind and gentle to me.

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From a painting by Frank Bramley, R.A.]

BETTY, GROWN QUITE A BIG GIRL.

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There is just one more thing I want to tell you about myself, little friends, before I make my final appeal to you. All of you will remember that I only took "Third Prize" for "Trotting" at the London Horse Show I went to, and master was rather troubled that I could not trot faster, though, of course, I think his standard is considered a very high one. One day master noticed that I sometimes got pacing, that is, moving with the legs of each side together, just like a camel or retriever dog. As there is sometimes a class for "Pacers" at some of the Horse Shows, master thought he would teach me to pace, and I heard him say to Ricketts, "The Elf is so good-looking, that if she can learn to pace very fast, I think she would have a good chance of winning a prize."

At first, whenever I struck a pace, I thought I was doing wrong, and at once went back into a trot, so, of course, the only way for master to teach me to pace was to prevent me from being able to trot.

To do this, master first put knee-caps on to me, lest I should fall and hurt myself, and

then he took me on to the soft tan of his riding school. I had sheepskin put round both my fore and hind legs to keep them from getting chafed, and then my right fore-leg was fastened to my right hind leg and *vice versâ*. At first master let the straps be very loose, so that I was merely tempted to move my legs of a side together; otherwise the straps seemed to pull at my legs.

For several weeks, but only for a very few minutes at a time, master gave me lessons in pacing. I fear I was very stupid for directly I felt the straps pulling, I stopped. After a time, however, especially when master began to gradually tighten the straps, I began to understand what he wanted me to do, and although for a long time I floundered about like men in a three-legged race do, I at last got thoroughly into the way of either pacing or trotting, whichever my master wished me to do. When my straps were first taken off, I was very much afraid of falling, especially when I had to go downhill; but this feeling of fear soon wore off, and I became quite brave.

I quickly began to be able to go faster and faster, and when I got up to my top speed trotting, I seemed naturally to glide into a pace nearly twice as fast. Master praised me a lot and encouraged me to pace as fast as ever I could, and I grew quite proud of my new achievement, and held my tail very high, and neighed my pleasure in my success to dear master.

I now know by the least indication from master, by the slightest touch of my rein, whether I am required to pace, trot, or walk, and I am full of hope, if ever I get the chance, that I may win honour and success for master, and thus repay him for all his dear patient teaching.

One day, master, who is writing a book on "Animal Sculpture," made me pose as a "Bronco pony," with the cowboy saddle and bridle. I simply hated having the sharp Mexican bit put into my mouth; but, of course, master never drove me with it in, only put it into my mouth to model from; but it taught me what a very great difference the kind of bit used for a horse means to him, and I felt very thankful for my smooth flat curb one.

And now, little humans, I think I have told you as much of my history and that of my friends as I can for the present, and I am now going to make a final appeal to you and ask you to do everything in your power to make the lives of the creatures of the animal world as happy and as bright and as free from pain as possible.

At any rate do your best, your very best to prevent the infliction of all unnecessary hurt; consider well their inability, except by a mute appeal, to tell you to what extent they are suffering. Remember that the little canary, in its cage in the nursery, takes a long time to die from hunger and thirst, though it suffers terribly when its seed and water are forgotten, while neglect to keep its house clean brings an agonising disease to its poor little body, called red mite, from the name of the insect which breeds in its feathers when its cage is allowed to remain uncleaned.

Pussy, too, requires to have her milk given to her regularly—not all the milk from the breakfast table given to her at once, making her feel ill and over-fed, while the little humans have short commons to drink

that morning, and then to be forgotten for two or three mornings in succession, nurse expecting the children to feed pussy and the children leaving her to nurse, and between the two parties pussy being forgotten altogether. No, that won't do, somebody must be responsible for every animal and caged bird about the place, and in the winter, when the ground is hard, for the free birds too.

At the house where Laddie and Golly lived before they came to the park, there lived also a beautiful blue Persian cat. One day she was found to be missing and yet her cries could be heard coming from somewhere. The house was searched and the garden and an empty house next door, but pussy could not be found. In time the cries became less frequent, and the cook began to wonder if she had imagined that she heard cries.

Fourteen days passed, and the cat had been given up as lost, and then the paper-hangers went into the empty house to get it ready for a new tenant. They opened a cupboard-door, and out walked, very feebly, but still walked, the blue Persian. Tenderly

one man lifted her up and took her to the house next door, and you can imagine Pussy's joy at finding herself in her own home once more.

The cook fed her very carefully, allowing her to have only very, very little milk at a time, and strange to say, the cat seemed quite well after a week of gradual feeding up, then she began to be sick and ill, her beautiful fur dropped out in handfuls, and all hope of saving the blue Persian's life was given up; but she did not die. After two months she began to get better, and now, Laddie tells me, is as fine a cat as ever she was.

A whole fortnight without either food or drink; think of it, little children, and remember what a long time animals can live even when starving, and be careful not to neglect giving them their meals. The angel of everlasting sleep often waits long, why we know not, before he will take poor, starving, neglected dumb creatures into his safe, happy, unconscious keeping.

Think of the blue Persian's long fast, and the illness it brought, and though in her case it was not neglect, but an unfortunate accident, which caused her suffering, you

can learn a lesson from the story, which is quite true, as nearly all the stories I have told you, both about myself and my friends, are true and taken from life.

The dog, too, which is your own particular pet, must be tended and cared for by you, yourself. Don't leave him to anyone, who, not having a keen interest in his welfare and happiness, might be tempted to leave his meals, and his coat, and his bath to chance. All these attentions are quite as necessary for the happiness of the dog as they are for you, dear humans, and think what a faithful patient companion and friend you have in this canine pet of yours.

The other day I heard of a dog who was so broken-hearted at the death of his master, that he went and sat on some tram-lines and waited for the tram to pass over his poor faithful body, that he, too, might be dead like his much-loved master, who in life had carefully warned him to avoid the lines as a source of danger. Instinct told the poor, noble brute that this was a way of giving up his life, and he resented with angry snarls and fierce bites all attempts to rescue him.

The dog courted death, perhaps in the hopes that death to him would mean reunion with his well-beloved master. Who shall say it would not?

I won't, dear humans, and somehow I think you won't either.

And my final plea is for my own brothers and sisters—the horse which comes into the pleasures and uses of life more than any other animal. Remember how you enjoy your canters on him, and how he loves to carry his precious human burden.

He draws the carriage which takes you to your parties, theatres, and concerts; and, little children, here I want to draw special attention to the parties, where you have such happy, gay times, because, at these, I think you are sometimes wanting in thought for the man and horse waiting outside for you, very often in the cold and wet, long past the hour at which you have told the coachman you will be ready to go home.

Your horse will wait without a murmur of complaint, in order that you may reach home dry and warm; and, little friends, you might have spared him this unnecessary exposure if you had given a little more thought to

your order, or, having given a time, kept to it, even if it meant a small self-denial, the shortening of a little pleasure on your side.

You would have saved your coachman and horse a weary wait, so in the future, if you say you will be ready to leave your party at nine o'clock, don't let it be ten or eleven o'clock before you say good-bye to your friends and call for your carriage. There is much, very much that the children can do, and each year which passes brings them nearer manhood and womanhood, when the ideas of kindness and thoughtfulness for their dumb friends, formed and fostered in youth, can have a wider scope.

The maiming of the horse's tail can meet with such strong and active abhorrence, that the horse-breeder, taking such horses to market, will find no sale for the poor creatures so disfigured—a sure and effective way of stopping the practice.

You, dear friends, demand the best and unspoiled when you wish to buy a horse, and especially insist on having one with the beautiful, useful tail uninjured, which nature gave for use and comfort. Beware, too,

of buying a horse whose tail has an unnatural, upright position, so much admired by many would-be horse lovers. Lovers only in name, however, for the horse, to have a tail in this position, has gone through unspeakable suffering.

Deep cuts have been made in the skin underneath the tail, and these have been filled with tow, and the tail kept in a perfectly upright position until the wounds healed, meaning that the poor horse was unable to lie down for at least a week or ten days after the operation, however much he wished to do so.

Children of the human world, let the ruling powers of your life be kindness and love. These powers are everywhere manifest at the park, and there is not a dumb animal about the place who would not join me in telling you, if he could speak the human language, that these powers make just all the difference in our lives.

I tell you this, not from my experience, for I have always lived in the atmosphere of "Love," but many of my friends have come from other homes where this power has not been so prevalent, and they have told

me of the great and wonderful difference it makes to them.

And now, little friends, I will say good-bye, for I have told you all I have to tell at present, and I hope you will like reading about me and my friends as much as I have enjoyed telling you about us.

I am going to leave it to the human, who has helped me to spell and write, to point out to you two or three ways in which children can further the humane work so excellently and earnestly organised by Mr. Fairholme, the Secretary of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and the keen supporter of the rights of all dumb and helpless creatures in that world to which I and my friends belong.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE "BAND OF MERCY."

THE Elf, gentle and affectionate as a dog, has finished telling you about her life and that of her friends up to the present time, and so I take the opportunity to make a few suggestions to you, dear children, as to the best means for carrying out all she has asked you to do in her dumb, eloquent appeal for her less fortunate brothers and sisters.

The great Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, to whose Secretary I am deeply indebted for the technical and legal information in this book, has started in connection with itself a junior branch, called the "Band of Mercy," and it is to this last-mentioned Society I want to draw your attention.

The "Band of Mercy" was formed especially to teach and to help children to

treat the dumb creatures in the world thoughtfully and kindly, and I don't think you could find a better Society to belong to ; no, not even if you searched the whole world over. This Band asks for something ; but at the same time it gives to its true and earnest members as much, or more, than it asks of them.

For mercy, as you know, is a twice-blessed quality ; the child who does an act of mercy gains much. The kindly thought or deed passing through his or her mind refines and beautifies the whole nature, and the face, which shines with the tenderness and gentle love of mercy, is more beautiful by far than the chiselled features of a perfect countenance which lacks this heaven-born light. Remember that so great and wonderful is this mercy, that it becomes the king upon the throne even better than his crown of gold and precious stones.

As the Elf has told you, the docking of horses' tails is a deed in which this quality of mercy has no part, and so, dear readers, I want you to join yourselves into a Band which shall be so strong and so firm that in time your efforts may be crowned with

success, and that this barbarity, amongst others, may henceforth be an act of the past.

Remember that there is strength in unity, and each one of you, dear children, however small and weak, is wanted to do his or her little part. It is a glorious feeling to be really wanted. Sometimes, when I was quite small, and things were not going quite right, and a baby sister had come to take, or anyhow to share, the attention of mother and nurse, I used to say, so I am told, "No one wants a little girl like me to help them"; but none of you can say this about the "Band of Mercy," because it wants you, one and all.

Its chief object is that little children may be taught from babyhood to be kind, and that the cruelty, said to be innate, more or less, in all humans' nature, may be eradicated without loss of time. It is of vital importance, that you, children, should not grow up in ignorance of the claims which animals have upon your sympathy and love. They are *NOT* to be regarded by you with indifference and as totally inferior beings.

I expect many of you, my little readers, will say to yourselves, we are not cruel, and

I feel sure, quite sure, that scarcely any of you are knowingly cruel; but there are so many ways of being cruel through ignorance, and I will tell you about a few of these ways, which are mentioned in one of the little magazines belonging to the "Band of Mercy."

One very popular way of being cruel, in many cases through ignorance, is the wearing of osprey and other feathers, which can only be secured by injury to the birds.

The osprey is obtained by taking the mother-bird away from her little ones, and they often die from starvation and neglect. Near to Aviemore, in the Highlands of Scotland, is a beautiful lake called Loch Eilen, in the centre of which is an island, and this island is one of the homes of the osprey in Great Britain. It is wonderfully beautiful, and very lonely, as though instinct had taught the osprey to live as far away as possible from the haunts of man, man with his power to hurt and kill.

If all people agree together that they will not wear osprey, then the temptation to secure it would be gone, and the baby osprey would not be deprived of its mother.

Then, again, many furs are only obtained by taking them from the living animal's back — a performance too ghastly and terrible for words, only to be stopped by absolute and firm refusal to wear furs so obtained.

Some ignorant people, finding an injured wild bird, will put it into a tiny cage and expect it to be happy, and some will even capture wild birds and condemn them to a life of imprisonment. Even tame birds should have large and airy cages.

The neglect of cats is another very common cruelty, especially during the summer holidays. We see them wandering about our streets, and often don't give them a second thought, yet they are sometimes stray cats, and very often hungry and thirsty, too. During the cold of January, licensing time, many poor dogs are turned adrift to starve and die.

I will just mention one more very frequent act of cruelty, though I am obliged to admit that there are several others; but I do not want to weary you, little children, or to ask you to remember too much.

It is the overloading of horses, especially

during the holiday time. Even children can refuse to ride behind a horse or horses whose burden is too heavy for them to carry, and help in the agitation of the grown-ups to procure extra service during the busy months of June, July, and August, when almost all the human world is on the move in search of pleasure and health. Of course, more horses are wanted at this time to carry the people and the luggage they entail than during the quieter seasons, hard though it is to impress the fact on some coach and 'bus owners, whose only object is to reap a harvest for themselves at the expense of their poor, overworked, and heavily-laden horses.

I will just mention also that the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has done a tremendous work in making a guinea charge for the medical examination of poor horses about to be shipped abroad; some to be worked until they drop, others, alas! to be eaten.

One of the saddest sights I have ever witnessed was to see a number of poor, worn-out horses, all tied together, on their way to be sold for shipping to Belgium.



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The fact that now the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals will allow no horse to be sent abroad without medical inspection, and that that inspection costs not less than one pound one shilling, saves many poor creatures from a terrible fate, because their owners often could not get as much as a guinea for them, so worn-out is their condition; and so they have to be released from the burden of life, or turned out as pensioners, because in England the law is very severe on the man who works a horse in an unfit condition. Therefore when he has reached the state of not being worth the necessary cost of inspection, he is at least saved the suffering of being shipped to some land where this law is not so strictly enforced.

The above are just a few of the many instances in which people might be unintentionally cruel from want of thought or ignorance, and the "Band of Mercy" wants to prevent such acts, by arousing in the minds of children such love and consideration for the members of the animal world, that these cruelties and all others may gradually but very surely, die out. What the E

asks you to do, and what I ask you to do, dear children, if you live in a place where a "Band of Mercy" has not yet been formed, is to persuade some kind, grown-up friend of yours to start one, which you and your young friends can join.

If this is not possible, though I want you to try very hard indeed not to let it be impossible, will you write to the Secretary of the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and he will most willingly and gladly put you in touch with the nearest branch of the "Band of Mercy" to where you live; but do try to form a centre in your own town or village. This thought and care for the creatures in the animal world wants to become much more broadcast, and these "Bands of Mercy" are the best means of spreading humane teaching.

There are six excellent reasons given by the "Band of Mercy" as to why children especially should become members, and as I think you will see the good in them, and the great personal gain to yourselves, I will tell you what they are:—

1. The children trained to be kind to animals grow up soft and gentle in their habits, and learn to think for themselves.

2. They realise at an early age that it is their duty not only to be kind to dumb creatures; but to protect them from harm.

3. It is only fair to the children that they should have the chance and opportunity of understanding the beauties of nature surrounding them, and of learning all the wonderful things which natural history can tell them.

4. The children, knowing the habits and needs of the animals around them, learn to know how to treat them humanely.

5. The children reaping the benefits of the knowledge and instruction given to them at their "Band of Mercy" grow up strong and wise in the ways of preventing cruelty of any sort to either humans or animals, and they have not to wait to be grown up to realise the responsibilities which, being "a child of God," brings with it towards the weak and sensitive creatures to be found in both these kingdoms of life.

6. Children, encouraged by the "Band of Mercy" to which they belong to cultivate the traits of loving kindness, tenderness, and consideration towards the helpless, the sensitive, and the weak, not only increase the happiness of animals, but also the happiness of their human friends. The children who are tender and kind, and thoughtful, are the greatest blessing; to

man and beast in this wonderful, beautiful, God-inspiring world of ours.

It is indeed true that there is much good to be gained by belonging to a "Band of Mercy," and by being a true and faithful follower of its teaching.

And so, dear children, don't lose time in asking your grown-up friends to form a "Band of Mercy" in your neighbourhood, and in case they put difficulties in the way, I will tell you, so that you may tell them, how to form one :—

1. Get your grown-up friend to ask other grown-ups to help her.

2. Then call a meeting.

3. Persuade all helpers to promise to get so many members.

4. Next appoint a committee consisting of a President, Secretary, and other members.

5. Make it a branch of the "Band of Mercy" of the governing body of the Ladies' Educational Committee of the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 105, Jermyn Street, London, which determines the rules, and authorises the Band Secretary to collect money to buy the "Band of Mercy Journal," members' cards, and medals.

When all this preliminary work is done the Secretary of the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals suggests that he should be communicated with, and a Form of affiliation be applied for, filled in and returned to him; and then the formation of your special branch of the "Band of Mercy" will be complete, and it will enjoy all the privileges which the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals offers to these junior branches in the sincere hope of gaining the interest and sympathy of the children.

Just a word of warning in your choice of the grown-up friend you ask to start your society, little friends; it must be someone who has a real love for children and animals, because it would never do to get a "Band" started, and for it to be a failure. And now, my children, I think I have told you all I can in order to help you to help the Elf.

Her special plea for the horses' tails is a great one; but don't despair. Tell your "Band of Mercy" teacher all the Elf has told you about the sufferings of poor Dandy. The Elf is such a happy creature herself, and yet she is thoughtful and most

done, anxious for the welfare of her less fortunate brothers and sisters; so do let us humans not be behind the Elf, but let us do everything in our power to make all and every deed of cruelty to animals acts of the past, with no part in present-day civilisation.

Let us realise that the creatures of the animal world are not made merely for our own use and pleasure, but that they, too, have or ought to have a right in the world, for they, as well as we, are a part of the marvellous and wonderful web of life—the beginning to most of us only a misty haze, the future all unknown. The present we have with us, and if the ruling principle of that present is to do unto others as we would be done by, then we shall not fail to be kind, and tender and loving.

I want the children to remember, especially when they grow down-hearted and hopeless, the words which the prophet Isaiah, so many hundreds of years ago, spoke concerning them and the creatures of the animal world :—

"A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM."

Notice the word "Lead," and put doubting thoughts aside, and make up your minds to do everything in your power to help the dear, beautiful Elf to carry out her noble aims and desires.

THE END.

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